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Chamberlain Defeats Spanish Democracy

Events have proved, as was feared, that Franco's overwhelming superiority in war material could not be matched in time on the Loyalist side, and consequently the Rebels have, after hard fighting, reached the coast and cut Loyalist Spain in two parts. This is of course a major victory which may decide the issue of the war. It would be self-deception to entertain much hope; nevertheless there is hope as long as the government does not surrender. What has defeated democracy in Spain is, of course, not principally the Spanish fascists and reactionaries, nor their Italian and German allies, nor the unholy concord with the Vatican, but the British Tories and the influence that they were able to exert in France and the United States which kept the Spanish government from receiving enough aid while the infamous Non-Intervention agreement was being violated at will by Mussolini and Hitler. If that attitude can be reversed, even yet it may not be too late. For the sake of honor, if for no better reason, the United States government should cast off the evil spell of the British government and permit the export of arms to the Spanish Loyalists.

Unrest in Japan

As we predicted three weeks ago, the Chinese successes in South Shantung have had serious repercussions in Japan, where it is now officially admitted that "great unrest prevails," while Premier Prince Konoye is reported at the point of resignation over demands by the military that the new National Mobilization Act be invoked. The Premier is in fact caught in a cleft stick, since if he invokes the act he thereby admits the extreme gravity of the military situation, with unforeseeable effect on public confidence; while if he persists in his refusal he will be loaded by the military chiefs with the responsibility for any future disasters to Japanese arms. The facts that Prince Saionji, last survivor of the Genro, has been consulted and that the Emperor's personal intervention is openly spoken of, are eloquent indices of the gravity of the governmental crisis. The military are seeking their own solution of the problem by rushing heavy reinforcements to the South Shantung battlefront; the relief of Yihsien and the capture of Suchow would settle everything. A powerful Japanese offensive may be anticipated within the next few days: not only Japanese prestige abroad, but the present dominant position of the military chiefs in the Japanese state seem staked on the outcome of the new drive. If the Chinese can win again they will have won a victory indeed. Meanwhile, in the background, fresh "border incidents" on the Soviet frontier provide ominous rumblings for Japanese ears.

Nonsense from a Senate Committee

The super-navy bill is being railroaded through Congress with all possible speed. As part of that process, it received a favorable report from the Senate Naval Affairs Committee on April 18. The Committee's report contains a choice bit of nonsense; the United States cannot afford a merely defensive navy, we are

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told, because we import valuable raw materials from abroad, such as tin, rubber, Manila fiber, quinine, silk manganese, chromium, tungsten and quicksilver. Therefore, an enemy power could defeat the United States merely by a long-distance blockade. The fact is, of course, that we are less dependent on foreign trade than any other nation in the world, and could buy for about $100,000,000 enough reserve stocks of those essential materials that we do not produce to last us for two years. If the Senate is worried, why does it not vote this relatively minor expenditure?

Next, the big-navalists define a defense navy as "one that is strong enough to defeat the enemy fleet wherever it can be brought into action." In other words, we must be able, far from our naval bases and close to those of our enemy, to defeat, let us say, the Japanese fleet in Asiatic waters, or the Italian in the eastern Mediterranean, the British in the North Sea. Defense, indeed! Such a navy would be impossible to build and, if it did exist, would be a threat to every nation on earth.

Finally, the term "national defense" is interpreted to mean "protection of citizens on legitimate business abroad; protection of American commerce and merchant marine to maintain the American standard of living; guarding approved national policies against foreign encroachment or abuse," etc. Is there any imperialistic policy that might not be justified by such a definition?

Unrealism About Collective Security

Our neighbor, The Nation, is circulating a questionnaire on the problem of collective security v. isolation. This is an interesting project, but we regret that The Nation has phrased its inquiry in such a way that it is almost impossible to return any answer except one in favor of collective security. The questionnaire ignores the possibility that it might ever be necessary to make good on a threat to go to war against an aggressor; if we could ensure peace by collectively making faces, who wouldn't do so? True, the Nation questionnaire talks about the use of "economic measures"; but it gives no details of what these measures would be, nor does it point out that pressure strong enough to compel an end to an existing conflict would itself be war. We agree with Ernest Meyer of The New York Post that the question The Nation should have asked is: "Are you willing to fight on foreign soil on behalf of collective security?" Even with this heavily weighted set of questions, however, The Nation's readers are overwhelmingly against collective security as it is commonly understood. One of the questions is: "Has the failure of the major democratic powers effectively to oppose the aggressions of Germany, Italy and Japan caused you to direct your hopes for collective action to non-official groups in all countries?" The answer to this question was yes by almost exactly two to one. In other words, The Nation's readers favor unofficial boycotts by private citizens, which The New Republic has steadily advocated, as avoiding the dangers implicit in the Roosevelt-Hull-Browder policy of trying to dictate the peace of the world.

A Proposition to Mr. LaGuardia

The plan set forth by Mayor LaGuardia to capture South American trade sounds like a scheme evolved by some economist of the seventeenth century. He wants to sell our goods to foreign customers at a loss if necessary to compete with other exporters, and subsidize the producers for the difference out of the public treasury. That may be good medicine for the manufacturers, but what advantage would it be for the people at large? We should be sending goods out of the country without getting their value to us in return. The rational purpose of foreign trade is not to give our wealth away but to get some wealth in return. If this sort of thing is to be done, it would be much better to subsidize producers for selling goods at a loss to citizens of this country. The writer of this paragraph, for instance, will gladly buy a Packard car at half-price if Mr. LaGuardia will get the taxpayers of New York to pay the rest.

The Committee Should Go On

Who interferes with liberty in this country and how? The greatest single contribution ever made toward an answer to this question has come from the Civil Liberties Committee of the United States Senate headed by Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin. The revelations the Committee has already made have repeatedly been described in our pages and need not be recited again. But the job is not yet done; plenty still remains, and it is important that the Committee continue its work. For this purpose it is asking Congress for $60,000, a small amount as Washington appropriations go. As might be expected, however, there are powerful forces who are doing everything in their power to defeat the appropriation. We urge our readers to register their attitude by writing or telegraphing to Senator James F. Byrnes, Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C., chairman of the Audit and Control Committee. It will also help if you will communicate with other members of Congress with whom you are in contact.

Ignorant Pundits

It seems that one of the chief requirements for writing a daily newspaper column, syndicated to millions of readers and exerting tremendous influence over public opinion on important matters, is ignorance of both facts and theory. Dorothy Thompson, for instance, revealed her abysmal lack of knowledge of the American background and of the details of legislation in her hysterical assault on the reorganization bill, as

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on several previous occasions. Her preparation for her immensely responsible job was, of course, merely that of a fairly clever foreign correspondent with a gift for language. But the specific occasion for this comment is a recent column by Mark Sullivan. In discussing pump-priming, Mr. Sullivan states that the increase in the national debt since 1933 is about $17,000,000,000, and that the total of "currency and bank-deposit money" in the country in normal times, when the pump is running at top speed, is $80,000,000,000 to $90,000,000,000. Therefore, he concludes, the New Deal has poured in a fifth of what the water is in a full well. A trained economist could make nothing out of this weird use of figures, no matter what his opinion as to the wisdom of pump-priming. The significant comparison would be between what the government spends out of borrowed funds in a single year and the amount of the yearly national income. Mr. Sullivan never seems to have grasped the elementary fact that money circulates. The purpose of pump-priming, is, of course, not chiefly to increase the amount of money in existence, but to speed up its use and movement.

Helium for Germany

The American State Department seems to be curiously eager to sell helium to Germany for use in dirigibles. Its memorandum on the subject says that lighter-than-air craft are no longer of military value, that Germany promises to use the helium only for commercial purposes, that she will get carefully limited amounts and that she should have them at once in order to maintain transatlantic passenger service during the summer. The difficulty is that the German government's solemnly given word is no longer respected by anyone; it has been broken too many times in the recent past. The State Department may be sure that helium is no longer of military value, but no one else is. We are a little puzzled to know why the Department is so anxious to befriend the Nazis while it continues its implacable hostility to the government of Spain.

Undesirable Refugees

We are heartily in favor of the suggestion that the United States extend its hospitality to political refugees from other countries, but this does not lessen our dislike of two recent ones. Former president Gerardo Machado, of Cuba, is now living in Miami, and Mr. Ernst Hanfstaengel is in New York City. Machado was very nearly as bloody-handed a dictator as the Western Hemisphere has ever seen. Careful estimates indicate that his police murdered without trial at least three hundred and fifty well known labor leaders, liberals, radicals and other opponents of his regime. Dr. Hanfstaengel was famous as Hitler's boy friend until he became the victim of a palace intrigue. Political sanctuary is supposed to be for the victims of persecution, not the persecutors themselves.

News Notes of a Week

The Mexican government replied to Great Britain's protest, and insisted on her right to take over the oil properties. . . . Rumania underwent fresh political upheavals, as it was reported that a revolutionary coup by the Iron Guard had been prevented. . . . Great Britain, straining every nerve to complete her rearmament, sought to buy airplanes in the United States and Canada.

The CIO took steps to make itself a permanent organization with a written constitution. . . . Members of the United Automobile Workers, faced by an influx of non-union workers and of members delinquent in their dues, picketed automobile plants in Flint, Michigan, and thereby caused a stoppage of production lines. . . . Representative Byron Scott of California introduced a resolution asking the President what nations, if any, have violated treaties to which the United States is a party. It was reported that this was the first move to substitute for the present Neutrality Act a system under which aggressor nations would be boycotted. . . . President Conant of Harvard firmly resisted pressure from Red-baiters to compel him to cancel the appointment of Granville Hicks, author and critic and admitted Communist sympathizer. Mr. Hicks had been named to a post as consultant on writing, but not to a formal teaching position.

Roosevelt's Expansion Program

IT IS POPULARLY SUPPOSED that the President has asked for additional spending, to the total of five billions or more, for attack on the new depression. Yet a close look at the proposal itself reduces materially the totals of those amounts that actually are likely to be spent, and spent in the near future. Let us look at the program, section by section.

Direct Relief. – The President has asked for an appropriation of $1,250,000,000 for the WPA, plus smaller amounts for the Farm Security Administration, the National Youth Administration and the CCC, making the relief total $1,550,000,000. The first important fact is that no part of these sums can be spent before July 1, when the next fiscal year begins. The next fact is that they do not represent any increase whatever above what is being spent this fiscal year. They are increases only in the sense that they are larger than the budget estimates, which previously had been cut in order to bring the budget more near a balance. *No increase in spending for direct relief is therefore contemplated.*

Loans to Business. – The RFC has already been authorized to lend $1,500,000,000 to business. A good

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deal of what is lent will probably go to railroads and utilities which are having difficulty in raising funds through the money market. How much will be loaned, and how soon, is problematical. Both railroad and utility problems are still subject to congressional consideration.

Public Works. – The President recommends new appropriations of $1,462,000,000 for public construction of various kinds. Of this, $462,000,000 is a clear addition to existing plans for spending, on housing, roads, flood control and federal buildings. The remaining $1,000,000,000 is to go to the PWA. At least $550,000,000 of this, and perhaps more, will be set aside for lending to states and local governments. These localities can either borrow 55 percent of the cost of their projects and receive a grant of 45 percent, as under the old arrangement; or they can borrow, without interest, amounts equal to the total cost of the new projects, the federal government paying the interest. Nothing is to be loaned on any project that cannot be started within six months of the date of the passage of the law, and finished within a year or a year and a half. The question is, how much money can be spent under these limitations. Many state or local governments will not want to incur further debt and interest charges; if they avoid the interest, the debt will be greater. And how many projects are nearly enough ready so that they can comply with the time requirements?

Bank Expansion. – This part of the program is not spending at all. The desterilization of gold adds $1,400,000,000 to bank reserves, and reducing Federal Reserve requirements in effect add another $750,000,000. The result is to increase excess reserves to the highest point in history—over $3,800,000,000. But reserves were already much larger than needed for the existing amount of deposits and loans. Whether the change results in any expansion of credit, and therefore of private spending, depends on whether the money is actually borrowed. The banks have had large excess reserves for several years, in addition to abnormally low interest rates, without stimulating borrowing. It is true that an expansion of credit amounting to $30,000,000,000 or $40,000,000,000 could be erected on this base, but whether credit will expand at all is uncertain. That depends on business conditions.

How Much Will Spending Be Increased? – Direct spending by the federal government will under this program be increased, therefore, not at all by relief, and somewhere between $462,000,000 and $1,462,000,000 by public works. Loans by the RFC may possibly add as much as $1,500,000,000 more, to be spent by business. The very top figure of the additional spending is therefore less than $3,000,000,000. The minimum might be as low as $500,000,000 or $1,000,000,000. These are large sums, to be sure, but not nearly large enough to cause inflation or even to assure recovery.

How Much Will the National Debt Be Increased? – Of the sums to be spent, a large proportion will merely be lent to subordinate governmental units, business concerns or individuals. Assuming that most of the loans are repaid, the net addition to the federal debt which this program involves could not be, at the outside, more than $1,500,000,000. It might be much smaller. This will leave us with a per-capita debt no larger than we had in 1920, and with a burden of interest charges that is less, per capita, than it was then.

Will the Program Bring Recovery? – It is not large enough to do more than prevent the existing situation from growing worse, or possibly to exert a mildly stimulating effect. The initiative for recovery is still left in the hands of private business and finance. If private investment is resumed in construction, in railroads, in utilities and elsewhere, we can have a genuine revival.

Will the program, on the other hand, retard recovery? It may do so, in certain respects. Loans to railroads and utilities which need to go through the wringer will merely postpone the achievement of a basis for increase of public investment on a large scale. The opposition of Tory politicians and financial interests may so frighten business men with nightmares of government debt, inflation or something else that they will still be afraid to borrow and spend for productive purposes.

In our opinion, the President's strategy was mistaken in allowing the spending program to be represented as gigantic when in reality it is small. A really large program, represented as not alarming in its proportions, would have provided more stimulation in fact, and might have been less frightening to the timid souls who, in positions of private power, run our economy.

Mussolini Wins

THE ANGLO-ITALIAN AGREEMENT, signed with such a furor on April 16, follows closely the predictions that had been made as to its contents. Italy agrees to take her men and materials out of Spain after the so-called civil war is over, and disclaims any permanent desire to control Spanish territory, politically or economically. Great Britain will do what she can to bring about general recognition of the conquest of Ethiopia. In the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Near East, the two countries pledge themselves to respect each other's territory and to refrain from hostile propaganda. Italy recognizes Great Britain's special

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interest in the region of Lake Tsana, and will withdraw her soldiers from Libya at the rate of 1,000 a week, until the garrison there has been reduced to normal size.

No third power (such as Germany?) is to gain a foothold in the Near East. Italy agrees not to use in Europe native troops from what was formerly Ethiopia; it is said, however, that this clause depends upon France's doing the same with her African troops. Since these are absolutely vital to the French military machine, it is safe to guess that this part of the agreement will never come into effect. The Suez Canal is to be kept open under all circumstances. Italy agrees to withdraw some soldiers from Spain on the proportional basis suggested by the infamous Non-Intervention Committee. Everyone knows of course that this token withdrawal will never take place, that the Spanish Loyalists have been betrayed by England, and Mr. Chamberlain is helping Franco to win and to win quickly.

What is there to say about the Anglo-Italian agreement that has not already been said? Publication of the exact terms only confirms the impression that Chamberlain has gambled the whole future of European civilization on such terms that he is sure to lose much and may lose everything. The notion that Italy was to be detached from Germany, recently put forward by British Tory apologists, is no longer heard. On the contrary, the news that an immediate effort will be made to come to an understanding with Berlin only strengthens the impression that England has joined the fascist bloc, that it is now the Berlin-London-Rome axis. It is a little too simple, perhaps, to say that Chamberlain has sold out the Empire for his class interest; but certainly, he has sold out democracy for the sake of a little time, and is likely to discover that his enemies have used the interval as shrewdly as he has.

Of all the weird aspects of this weird business, the most incredible is that Chamberlain should assume that Mussolini's word can be relied upon. Il Duce has been engaged for eighteen months in a large-scale war in Spain without ever admitting it—one of the most monstrous pieces of hypocrisy in all history. Yet the British government blindly accepts the idea that the Roman dictator will keep his word, will take his soldiers out of Spain and relinquish the whole territory, will end the Libyan threat to Egypt, and so on. We submit that this is naïveté too complete for a wicked world. Mussolini, most assuredly, will continue to do whatever he considers to his advantage, whether Chamberlain likes it or doesn't, whether Rome has signed a treaty about it or hasn't.

France, as usual, is only the tail to the British kite. No sooner had the Anglo-Italian treaty been completed than the French began negotiations of their own with Rome. Some observers profess to see in this an encirclement of Hitler, an Anglo-French-Italian group hostile to his plans. But hostile to which of them, exactly? So far as Mussolini is concerned, he wants Germany to stay north of the Brenner Pass, and not cut too much of a figure in the Balkans and on the lower Danube. He does not care particularly what Hitler does to Czechoslovakia or to Soviet Russia, and this indifference is seemingly shared by Chamberlain. France certainly objects to the seizure of Czechoslovakia, and retains something—just how much is questionable—of her understanding with Soviet Russia. But what could she do, between hostile England and hostile Italy? "Perfidious Albion" casts a long shadow indeed.

For Americans the most urgent question is what effect the Anglo-Italian agreement will have on the situation in the Far East. Months ago we were told that a joint Anglo-American attempt to coerce Japan was prevented chiefly by the fact that Great Britain could not spare from the Mediterranean the necessary ships. Can she do so now, and if so may we expect a Roosevelt-Hull-Chamberlain attempt to "enforce law and order" in the Orient? Has China's recent amazing demonstration of strength in the field caused the American people to feel that perhaps the time is ripe?

Anything of the sort would be a tragic mistake from America's point of view. It is now glaringly apparent that the British government is not trying to maintain collective security, or to strengthen the democracies vis-a-vis *fascismo*. Mr. Chamberlain is engaged in old-fashioned imperialistic alliances for the benefit primarily of the British owning class. Any arrangement he would make in the Far East would be on familiar imperialist lines. It would safeguard invested capital at the sacrifice of the workers. It would set up a balance between conflicting imperial ambitions that would sow the seeds of future war.

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British Labor's Lost Chances

THE PARALYTIC CALM with which the two Western democracies have watched the successive strokes of the three Have-Not powers will puzzle future historians. It springs from no false sense of security, for the British are dimly, and the French acutely, aware of their danger. An uneasy conscience in part explains it, for it is felt to be the nemesis for Versailles. A sense of military weakness makes for prudence, and middle-aged men dread war with a memory still so vivid that at almost any price they would rather yield than resist. But even to this passivity there is a limit, and in England during the month of March it was nearly reached.

The change of mood began with Mr. Anthony Eden's resignation. This sympathetic young man is popular and the average man approves the stand he took. After a long experience of the far from subtle duplicity of Italian policy, it was only common sense to defer any negotiations for a return to the old cordial amity with Rome until the Duce's troops had actually quitted Spain. No one was quite sure that they knew precisely what Mr. Eden and Lord Cranborne meant when they talked of negotiating under a threat that amounted to "blackmail"; but some of us could guess.

The methods used for measuring the drift of public opinion in England are primitive, but such as they are, they suggested that a big majority of average citizens were on Mr. Eden's side and against the far from popular Prime Minister. On the Left, often in private and here and there in the press, one now heard the tentative suggestion that this idealist who had now proved his independence, might conceivably be a possible leader for a coalition of the Center and Left. For my own part I cannot see in him the dynamic qualities necessary for such a part, nor is his outlook, save in his attitude to the Fascist powers and the League of Nations, markedly different from that of his class. None the less, the opportunity had come to drive a wedge into the far from solid ranks of the governing majority. The Labor Party took it clumsily, for it so drafted its motion on Mr. Eden's resignation that no Tory could have voted for it. It was significant of the state of feeling that one daring member of this well drilled party actually did so, and more than a score abstained from voting at all.

Hard on this event came the shattering news of the annexation of Austria. No one should have been surprised, but in fact nearly everyone was staggered. Has an ancient state, which we all honor as a leader in civilization, ever before vanished from the map in a night? You could feel the tremor of this earthquake in the sleepiest English village. Presently the ground shook under our English feet while Barcelona was bombed from the air. If this great Catalan city, then why not London? Everyone realized that while Lord Perth and Count Ciano were conversing amicably in Rome, the Italian and German planes and guns had begun the final conquest of Spain for "the Axis." All Europe seemed to revolve helplessly around it, and everyone looked anxiously toward Czechoslovakia. When would this encircled salient be marked down for the next assault? Day after day in the Commons the Opposition struggled to extract from Mr. Chamberlain at question-time some pledge of support for the next victim of destiny, but without result.

This was too much. One began to hear whispers of revolt in the Tory ranks. The rebels, one gathered, had the sympathy of some of the abler younger members of the Cabinet—Mr. Eden's friends, who ought to have resigned with him but dared not. Behind the scenes, that restless intriguer, Mr. Winston Churchill, was active, and his friends thought they could count on the support of fifty members of the Tory rank and file. There were, however, many difficulties in the way. Who would lead the revolt? Mr. Eden inspires trust in the sense that he is not a careerist, but he lacks the stature for this part. Mr. Churchill in intellect and energy has no equal in English public life; he has experience and would make a brilliant organizer of victory. But no one trusts this dashing free lance, who has changed sides oftener even than his great ancestor, Marlborough. Again, for Liberals and Socialists the passionate subject of immediate concern is Spain, while towards the Republic Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden are at best neutral. Finally, the official Labor Party had as yet given no sign that it was ready to consider any alliance, however loose and temporary, with any other party.

In this emergency a few men outside the jealous world of the professional politicians came forward as liaison officers. The fruits of their work may be described with due discretion. They ascertained that the gravity of the crisis had at last broken down the complacency of some members of Labor's Front Bench. The problem was, plainly, to upset Mr. Neville Chamberlain at once, if possible without an election. An appeal to the country would consume at least three weeks, and who dared say that the Spanish Republic could live so long? Clearly then, the Tory rebels must lead. If they knew in advance that Labor and the Liberals would collaborate with them, the nucleus of fifty might swell to a much more formidable number. The Liberals, a minute but able group in the House, were ready and eager, and they carry with them some still influential newspapers and an appreciable minority vote in every constituency. The difficulty lay in the

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stubborn belief of the Labor machine that it can, on a day not very far ahead, achieve a majority unaided. That, with its present leadership, wooden, unimaginative and incapable of any fresh thinking, it never will do. But a rapid exploration yielded surprising results. If someone else would lead and bear the burden of responsibility, there were eight or nine members of Labor's Front Bench who would welcome a coalition formed to make a stand against the dictators.

The high-water mark of this rally was reached on Sunday, March 20. Reynolds' News published a startling editorial article, well displayed, which advocated an alliance that should include with the Labor Party, the Liberals, the Tory rebels and even the Communists. American readers, unfamiliar with the tight discipline of English politics, which extends even to the press, may not realize how much this meant. Reynolds' News is an old-established paper, which played a part in the Chartist movement. It has a circulation of close on half a million spread over the whole island, and is owned by the powerful coöperative movement. Its editor, Mr. Sydney Elliott, took a risk by defying all the canons of Labor discipline, but he believed (as I think correctly) that the mass of the party is already with him. On this same Sunday evening, Mr. Herbert Morrison at a mass demonstration in London took the same line. He spoke, it is true, not with a journalist's frankness, but with Front Bench caution. His meaning was, none the less, clear: he too, was ready for a coalition. Now Mr. Morrison, who governs all London as the leader of the Labor majority of its County Council, is the ablest member of the Party's Front Bench in the Commons.

The rest of the story is a depressing anti-climax. Over the week-end, Mr. Chamberlain, for the time being, brought his rebels to heel. He would not resign if he were defeated in the Commons: he would dissolve Parliament and face the country, as the man who had kept it and would keep it out of war. He did, however, compromise over Czechoslovakia, for he undertook to issue a warning that might hold Hitler for a time at bay. On Tuesday the National Council of the whole labor movement met. This body brings together the Parliamentary Party, the Party in the country and the trade unions. In fact it is simply these last multiplied by three, albeit with a slight dilution. It ought to have issued a ringing challenge to the government over Spain and the whole European situation, backed by an offer to collaborate in forming an alternative combination with any like-minded group, or groups. In fact, after an inconclusive confidential discussion, it rose in silence, on the plea that it awaited Mr. Chamberlain's promised speech on Thursday.

On Wednesday came yet another and much bigger opportunity, such a chance as comes only once in a generation. For the first time since the General Strike of 1926, the Prime Minister invited the Executive of the Trade Union Congress to meet him. The Empire had a request to address to the organized workers. Rearmament proceeds slowly, though at colossal expense. The Germans have still an air force double that of Great Britain—or as some say treble—and a vastly greater manufacturing capacity. If the pace is to be quickened, the unions must agree to suspend their craft rules and accept a large measure of dilution. Every consideration of class interests and all the lessons of the World War made for a cautious, if not negative answer. But the political case for a flat refusal was incomparably stronger. In this situation any body of Socialists (and these men make that profession) and, indeed, any body of clear-sighted liberals, would have answered: "No, sir, we have watched the record of your government from the affairs of Manchuria and Ethiopia down to today's betrayal of Spain. For your government and for your policy we will abate nothing of the rigor of our rules. But a government, no matter how composed, that will stand for public law and the rights of our comrades in democratic lands, will find us ready for every reasonable sacrifice." Had the labor unions made such an answer as this, the government must have fallen. In this hour of peril no government that fails to command the full confidence of the workers in the tasks of defense could live for long in this or any democratic country.

On the Thursday of this crucial week Mr. Chamberlain made his statement. It professed complete satisfaction with Italy's honorable conduct in Spain. It accepted at their face value her pledges of disinterestedness, political and economic, in the Peninsula. It refused any pledge to support Czechoslovakia in the event of aggression, or to France if she should go to that country's aid. But it did warn the Germans of the "probability" that in that event other countries would be "drawn in." Finally it struck the traditional note of Imperial Self-Defense. For the Empire and its communications Britain would fight, for France across the Channel, and for "Portugal, Irak and Egypt." Such are its clients: for these it asks from the workers today their sweat, tomorrow their blood.

The dramatic moment has been missed. The political leaders are too often the more or less conscious tools of the governing class. None the less, the idea of a People's Front makes progress and may one day bear fruit, too late to hearten the French or to save the Spaniards. The engineers (A.E.U.) have, moreover, shown a much stiffer front than the Trade Union Congress. Theirs is the key union. With bolder leadership in the English working class, the current of European history might last month have been deflected. All we may now hope for is a belated revolt, after the conquest of Spain has rendered the strategic position of the two Western democracies barely defensible.

This narrative the historian will have to fit into a

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broader chronicle of lost chances. The central tragedy was enacted in Paris, when Señor Negrin, after the recapture of Teruel, sped northwards to warn the sister nation that the case of the Republic was desperate. The French soldiers, with General Gamelin at their head, were for granting his petition on grounds of military safety. But France at that moment had no government, and in effect she has had none since. Without some prospect of British backing in the last resort, M. Blum dared not act. When her hour strikes for Czechoslovakia, the same doubt over British help may be equally paralyzing. Only one combination exists in theory, which if firmly knit for action might by its overwhelming weight save Europe from the need for the actual use of force—an alliance of Britain, France and Russia. But Russia presents a barbaric spectacle that shames even her staunchest friends. France has no government, and the English ruling class as yet dislikes "the reds" more than it fears the dictators. They march, accordingly, from conquest to conquest.

London H. N. BRAILSFORD

Hemingway Reports Spain

As we have done on two previous occasions, we present below selected passages from recent dispatches of Ernest Hemingway, who is reporting the Spanish war for the North American Newspaper Alliance. They have already been printed in various newspapers affiliated with the Alliance, but such publication has often been incomplete because of lack of space.—THE EDITORS

Barcelona

IT WAS A LOVELY FALSE SPRING DAY when we started for the front this morning. Last night, coming in to Barcelona, it had been gray, foggy, dirty and sad, but today it was bright and warm, and pink almond blossoms colored the gray hills and brightened the dusty green rows of olive trees.

Then, outside of Reus, on a straight smooth highway with olive orchards on each side, the chauffeur from the rumble seat shouted, "Planes, planes!" and, rubber screeching, we stopped the car under a tree.

"They're right over us," the chauffeur said, and, as this correspondent dove headforward into a ditch, he looked up sideways, watching a monoplane come down and wing over and then evidently decide a single car was not worth turning his eight machine guns loose on.

But, as we watched, came a sudden egg-dropping explosion of bombs, and, ahead, Reus, silhouetted against hills a half-mile away, disappeared in a brick-dust-colored cloud of smoke. We made our way through the town, the main street blocked by broken houses and a smashed water main, and, stopping, tried to get a policeman to shoot a wounded horse, but the owner thought it was still possibly worth saving and we went on up toward the mountain pass that leads to the little Catalan city of Falset. Soon we began passing carts loaded with refugees. An old woman was driving one, crying and sobbing while she swung a whip. She was the only woman I saw crying all day. There were eight children following another cart and one little boy pushed on a wheel as they came up a difficult grade. Bedding, sewing machines, blankets, cooking utensils and mattresses wrapped in mats, sacks of grain for the horses and mules were piled in the carts and goats and sheep were tethered to the tailboards. There was no panic, they were just plodding along.

On a mule piled high with bedding rode a woman holding a still freshly red-faced baby that could not have been two days old. The mother's head swung steadily up and down with the motion of the beast she rode, and the baby's jet-black hair was drifted gray with the dust. A man led the mule forward, looking back over his shoulder and then looking forward at the road.

"When was the baby born?" I asked him, as our car swung alongside. "Yesterday," he said proudly, and the car was past. But all these people, no matter where else they looked as they walked or rode, all looked up to watch the sky.

Then we began to see soldiers straggling along. Some carried their rifles by the muzzles, some had no arms. At first there were only a few troops, then finally there was a steady stream, with whole units intact. Then there were troops in trucks, troops marching, trucks with guns, with tanks, with anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, and always a line of people walking.

As we went on, the road choked and swelled with this migration, until, finally, it was not just the road, but streaming alongside the road by all the old paths for driving cattle came the civilian population and the troops. There was no panic at all, only a steady movement, and many of the people seemed cheerful. But perhaps it was the day. The day was so lovely that it seemed ridiculous that anyone should ever die.

Barcelona

For two days, this correspondent has been doing the most dangerous thing you can do in this war. That is, keep close behind an unstabilized line where the enemy is attacking with mechanized forces. It's the most dangerous because the first thing you see is the tanks, and the tanks don't take prisoners; they don't give orders to halt, and they use incendiary bullets on your car.

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And the only way you know they're there is when you see them.

We had been checking the front and trying to locate the Lincoln-Washington Battalion, from which no word had been heard since Gandesa was captured two days ago. The last time they had been seen, they were holding out on top of a hill outside Gandesa. On their right, the British battalion of the same brigade was holding up the Fascist advance all that day with them, and, after darkness came and both battalions had been surrounded, nobody had heard anything from the Lincoln-Washington outfit.

There were 450 men when they stood on that hill. Today we found eight of them and learned that probably 150 more had cut their way through. . . . Three of the eight, John Gates, Joseph Hecht and George Watts, had swum the Ebro River opposite Miravet. When we saw them at noon they were barefoot and had just been given clothes. They had been naked since they had crossed the river at daylight. The Ebro, they said, was a fast-flowing, very cold river, and six others who had tried to swim it, four of whom were wounded, drowned.

Standing in the dusty brush beside a very nervous-making road, already well up behind the Fascist advance down the Ebro, we listened to the story of their break through after the battalion had been surrounded. Of their stand before Gandesa, with the mechanized columns and tanks already past them. Of the wild night when the battalion was split into two parts, one going south, one east, and, from the scout officer who led one group which included the chief of staff, the brigade commissar and the battalion commissar, slightly wounded at Gandesa, and thirty-five others, of the possible capture of this group at Corbera, just north of Gandesa.

Of adventures through the Fascist lines, how, in wandering into the enemy lines at night, when challenged, they asked in Spanish, "What outfit are you?" and a sleepy voice answered in German, "We're the Eighth Division." Creeping through another camp, stepping on a sleeping man's hand, hearing him say in German, "Get off my hand." Of having to break across an open field toward the bank of the Ebro and being sniped at by artillery controlled by an observation plane overhead. Finally, the desperate swimming of the Ebro and wandering down the road, not to desert, not to try to reach the frontier, but looking for the remainder of the battalion so they could reform and join the brigade.

The scout officer, telling of the possible loss of the chief of staff, said: "I was ahead, going through an orchard just north of Corbera, when someone in the dark challenged. I covered him with my pistol and he called for the corporal of the guard. As the guard came, I shouted to those behind, 'This way, this way!' and ran through the orchard to pass north of the town. But no one followed. I could hear them running toward the town. Then I could hear commands of 'Hands up! Hands up!' and it sounded as though they had been surrounded. Perhaps they got away, but it sounded as though some were captured."

The British battalion, led by Waters, found boats further north on the Ebro and crossed successfully. Three hundred men, commanded by Waters, were marching down the road toward us, but we could not wait as we were due at Tortosa to check the situation there. . . .

Tortosa

Driving carefully between the boxes of dynamite set to mine the small stone bridges on the narrow road, we worked our way up the Ebro Valley. . . . Stopping to ask a soldier who was walking leisurely in the direction of the front where headquarters was located, we heard machine-gun fire hammering on ahead and the noise of shells bursting. Then, above these reassuring sounds that meant the front was located, came the drone of planes and the bung, bung, bung of bombs.

Leaving the car in the shade made by the steep left bank, we climbed to the top of a sheer, terraced ridge where we could see the planes. Below us was the river, the little town of Cherta in a bend between the river and the road, and, beyond, the planes were bombing where a road cut between mountains that looked as though they had been molded in gray papier-mâché for some fantastic stage-set.

Black puffs of anti-aircraft bursts blossomed around them and showed they were government planes. Government anti-aircraft bursts are white. Then, with a noise as though the sky was being hammered to pieces, more bombers came over. Crouched against a stone wall on the ridge-top, taking advantage of the shadow cast, you saw from the red wing-tips they were government, too.

As the droning faded, the machine-gun firing intensified ahead, and, as the shelling increased, you knew there was an attack a little way up the road. . . .

Beside the car was an Andalusian soldier from a division holding a line up the river. He was tall and gaunt and very cool and very tired.

"You can go on past the town, but there has had to be a little retirement today, so I wouldn't go too far," he said.

He said his brigade had been surrounded three times since the drive toward the sea had started, had cut its way out and drifted through at night and now had rejoined the division.

"We've held them here three days now," he said. "The Italian infantry is no good and we drive them back whenever we counter-attack, but they've got so much artillery and planes and we've been fighting three weeks now with no rest. The men are all very tired."

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

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On the Labor Front

Anti-Lynching Laws and Labor

THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY has just adopted an important amendment to the state anti-lynching statute of 1928 which eliminates the possibility that felony charges will be preferred hereafter under that act against strikers who participate in minor brawls on picket lines. Since such charges were preferred last summer against strikers who took part in a mêlée at one of the gates of the Industrial Rayon Corporation at Covington, and juries imposed heavy prison sentences in three cases, there was serious need for this legislative adjustment.

Whence came the inspiration that led to the invocation of the state anti-lynching law against the strikers who interfered with employees returning to work at the Covington mill on July 7, 1937? That is a mystery. Both Judge Benjamin Haden, who presides over the court where the men were tried, and Commonwealth's Attorney Cecil Collins denied all knowledge of how warrants charging violation of the anti-lynching statute happened to be sworn out. Collins admitted that the workers who were attacked, and who swore out the warrants, probably had never heard of the law before, since it had not previously been invoked in a labor dispute.

Another interesting aspect of the case lay in the fact that although Covington is an industrial town of some 8,000 people, no effort was made to get a jury there, but the prosecution's request for a venire from Highland County was granted. When it is realized that there is no industry whatever in Highland County, which is mountainous and without a single mile of railroad, the importance of this factor can be grasped.

Under the anti-lynching statute, a mob is defined as "a collection of people assembled for the purpose and with the intention of committing assault and/or battery upon any person, without authority of the law," and Judge Haden ruled that any member of such a mob is criminally liable for every act committed by any other member. The penalties provided are from one to ten years in prison.

Glenn Perkins, first of the strikers to go on trial, got four years from the Highland jury, although it was conceded that no one received more than superficial scratches in the brawl at the mill gate. He was charged with wielding a light eighteen-inch stick and with helping to push over an automobile. If he had been tried for assault and battery, he would have faced a maximum penalty of twelve months in jail.

It is worth noting that the prosecution sought at Perkins' trial, and those which followed under the anti-lynching statute, to create the impression that a meeting had been held the night of July 6, at which instructions were given not to permit any workers to go back to their jobs the following day. Each defendant and all defense witnesses loudly denied that anything of the sort had taken place at the nightly union executive meeting on the date in question, and no effort was made by the prosecution to prove the contrary. But by asking every defense witness if such a plot wasn't hatched on the night of July 6, the impression was created in the mind of the jury that such was the case, even though no shred of supporting evidence was presented. The idea was to show, of course, that the strikers had formed a definite plan to assault the "back-to-work" forces when those forces reached the mill gate.

When the four-year sentence was imposed on Perkins, The Richmond Times-Dispatch protested vigorously in its editorial columns. Then came the trial of Ray Beatty, who got three years. Then Charles Mundy got two years. The trials were not covered in much detail up to that time in any Virginia newspaper. Covington is some two hundred miles from Richmond, near the West Virginia line. It was known at the capital that the men were being tried for "assault and battery while a member of a mob," but it had not been made clear that this phrase was taken from the anti-lynching law, until The Times-Dispatch sent a staff correspondent to cover the trial of R. E. Benson, the fourth defendant. This correspondent revealed at once that the anti-lynching law was being invoked. Protests followed in various papers, and Benson got only nine months.

By this time, the state was fairly well aroused. After the Benson trial, the remaining prosecutions were dropped, although sixteen defendants had been indicted. However, Judge Haden preferred contempt charges against Perkins, Beatty, Mundy and many others, on the ground that they had violated an injunction restricting picketing which had been issued by him. He found the three men guilty, and imposed jail sentences of eight, nine and six months, respectively, in addition to their prison terms.

The volume of protests against the prosecution of the men under the anti-lynching statute was now considerable. Several newspapers inside the state, and others outside, were sharply critical of the jury verdicts under that statute. The court announced that if the three defendants would serve the jail sentences for contempt, the prison sentences imposed upon them would be suspended. Perkins promptly availed himself of the offer and, after forty-eight days in jail, was released. The other two spent several months decid-

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ing whether to appeal their convictions under the anti-lynching law. It was feared by Arthur P. McNulty—now a municipal justice in New York City but then a CIO attorney and chief defense counsel for the men—that if either of those convictions was allowed to stand, strikers similarly situated in Virginia would thereafter be subject to prosecution as felons, and the organized labor movement in the state would be virtually destroyed. Beatty and Mundy finally decided not to appeal, and to serve the contempt sentences. They accordingly went to jail. Both have now been released, the former after serving fifty-six days and the latter after serving twenty-four.

While they were in jail, the Virginia Legislature passed amendments to the anti-lynching law which were endorsed by organized labor and which provide that participants in disorders on picket lines shall be amenable to the general law, rather than to the law against lynching. In other words, if pickets commit a simple assault, as was the case at Covington, they are to be prosecuted for assault and battery, and subjected to a maximum penalty of twelve months. Where the assault is malicious, with intent to maim or disfigure, the offender is chargeable with a felony, and he faces a penalty of from one to ten years. Where such an assault results in death, murder charges are preferred.

Finis can therefore be written to the Covington cases. As matters turned out, the maximum term served by any of the strikers was less than seven weeks, but it is impossible to say what would have happened if no outside agency had espoused their cause. The cases serve to illustrate, among other things, the importance of making anti-lynching statutes, whether state or federal, inapplicable to persons involved in labor disputes. VIRGINIUS DABNEY

Wall Street Organizes

THE CIO has begun a drive to organize the workers in Wall Street. It is one salient in the campaign to unionize America's four million white-collar employees who are steadily being drawn into the CIO's affiliate, the United Office and Professional Workers of America. In order to approach the men and women who work in Wall Street, the Financial Employers' Organizing Committee has been set up with Lewis Merrill, president of the UOPWA, as its head. Its members are Michael Quill, Heywood Broun, Mervyn Rathbone, Jacob Baker, Samuel Wolchak, Jonathan Eddy, Abram Flexner, Peter K. Hawley and Allan Heywood. The campaign is being directed from offices at 79 Wall Street by Richard Lewis and a staff of organizers.

The Financial Employees' Organizing Committee is meeting with a favorable reception from Wall Street workers, for the Street has changed tremendously since the days when Drover Drew and the Commodore raced their sulkies down its cobblestones. For one thing, the Horatio Alger myth has gone with the wind. The boss in the front office can no longer take care of individual employees—130,000 of them—when they are massed by hundreds in large banks and brokerage houses. Better paid positions go to a dynasty of relatives of the partners and directors or officers. Opportunities of graduating from the ranks have dwindled to the vanishing point.

At the same time conditions of work have grown worse. Widespread mechanization of work and centralization of labor to cut down overhead and increase "production" have transformed the financial employee into a mere cog geared to the highest speed he will bear without protest. Moreover, extreme insecurity of tenure is prevalent, with mass lay-offs following the frequent dips in the market. Vicious stagger systems such as the "Scotch Week," whereby one week in four or five is a forced vacation without pay, are coupled with long hours of overtime with no more compensation than a dollar for supper money. And salaries are incommensurate with the high standards demanded of character, education, training, accuracy, etc.

As for wages, the FEOC, believing that the $157 average salary for brokerage workers reckoned from the federal business census of 1935 was far too high, made a survey of these wages. The results explode once and for all the myth of the wonderful Wall Street salary. The fact was that one-fifth of the employees receive less than $20 per week, one-third less than $25 per week, one-half less than $30 a week and more than two-thirds receive less than $35 per week. The Wall Street wage scale is actually lower than the American minimum of $1,800 yearly stipulated by the United States Bureau of Home Economics.

Wall Street bankers and brokers still adhere to the "double standard"—at least in their labor relations. Although they themselves are the best organized group in the nation, they denounce the organization of their own employees. Each tycoon belongs to several "unions" ranging from the United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Manufacturers' Association to smaller ones such as the Steamship Owners' Association or the Association of Stock Exchange Firms. But when their employees combine for *their* mutual economic betterment, it just isn't cricket. Now, however, the law of the land says that as far as organization goes, what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

When the FEOC organized 90 percent of the employees of the Bank of Yorktown and applied on October 25 for certification as the sole collective-bargaining agency, Mrs. Herrick of the NLRB declared there was "nothing in the National Labor Relations Act which denies to bank employees the same rights accorded to other employees." Seconding this, William R. White, State Superintendent of Banks, indicated

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that there was no law or precedent denying bank employees the right to organize. Thus a motion by the bank's attorney to dismiss this test case on the grounds that the bank was exempt from the jurisdiction of the State Labor Relations Board was denied by Paul M. Herzog, chairman, at a recent hearing. Since this last obstacle has been cleared away, and since the certification of the FEOC as the sole collective-bargaining agency of the Bank of Yorktown's employees is imminent, the FEOC's offices have already had a deluge of applications and inquiries from Wall Street's workers.

ROBERT STUART

The Autobiographers

SOME FIFTY AUTOBIOGRAPHIES by American intellectuals have been published in the last few years. They make up one of the strangest bodies of writing in contemporary literature. Taking them all together, they total about 20,000 pages of documentation on the intellectual life of the years between 1900 and 1929. Their scope is enormous, and the cast of characters is as big as the telephone book of Beaumont, Texas. Aside from the fifty leading figures—the autobiographers themselves—there must be at least a thousand minor characters in these volumes: parents, wives, mistresses and eminent public figures who, as is so often the case with minor characters, are frequently more interesting than the ones featured in the billing.

Steffens' father, who did not know of his son's marriage for several years after it had taken place, or Gertrude Stein's older brother, who managed the family interests in San Francisco street railways, or Mabel Dodge Luhan's father, perhaps the most intuitive individual in the entire collection, who, when he heard of the first of her four marriages, "gave a whoop" and went to bed with a terrific attack of gout —these people from the supporting cast, although we do not hear enough about them, make the world of the autobiographers richer in social documentation than the authors themselves have apparently realized. Edwin Dodge, Mrs. Luhan's second husband, who refused to vibrate sympathetically to her Florentine artists and was always finding it necessary to return to the United States when the art life really got going, appears to have been an interesting personality, and I would prefer to hear more about him and less about Mrs. Luhan's impressions of Gertrude Stein, Walter Lippmann, Gordon Craig or Mrs. Luhan herself. The enigmatic character of Joseph Freeman's father, whenever we catch a glimpse of him through the cloudy discussions of Max Eastman and Irwin Edman that swirl through Freeman's autobiography, looks like another personality worth investigating—he landed in New York with nothing but several children to his name, quietly built up his fortune in a few years and, we are given to understand, was pretty skeptical about Joe's enthusiasm for Walter Pater. The worst you can say about the autobiographers is that you frequently feel that they have written about the wrong people.

To a remarkable degree their lives overlapped. They all knew each other and moved in the same circles and had opinions remarkably alike. They all knew Carlo Tresca, Walter Lippmann, Max Eastman, John Reed, Big Bill Haywood, Alfred Kreymborg, Floyd Dell, Hutchins Hapgood, Gertrude Stein and Amy Lowell. They all knew Mabel Dodge Luhan and she knew them. They were all in the Provincetown Players together, along with Susan Glaspell, Eugene O'Neill and Harry Kemp. In 1913 they all went to the Armory Show in New York, where the celebrated "Nude Descending a Staircase" created such a rumpus. They all went to John Reed's Paterson Pageant to aid the Paterson strikers—Madison Square Garden must have been crowded, that night, with autobiographers and their families. They started Poetry in 1912, and took part in that bewildering sequence of publications that preceded The New Masses—the old Masses, The Liberator, the new old Masses and the old New Masses—the exact chronology of which interests them to this day. They took part in that sudden break-up of the old taboos in art and literature and social life before the War, and witnessed the subsequent awakening of a new, exciting spirit in American letters, the results of which are apparent in the present fine flourishing state of our cultural life. They saw the unemployed riots in New York in 1914, the Mexican revolution in 1915, and in 1917, in Russia, they saw Bill Shatov, Lenin, Lunacharsky and Trotsky. They were in London when the War broke out and in Paris when the peace treaty was signed. They saw the Fascists take power in Italy and were in Germany during the inflation. They got around a lot. And wherever they were, they met each other, if, indeed, they had not gone there together.

When Marguerite Harrison ("There's Always Tomorrow") landed in Berlin after the War, working for the American secret service, she lived with an English lady who had been part of Mabel Dodge Luhan's Florentine group ("European Experiences") and who was now a British secret agent. Marguerite Harrison rushed to the Rhineland to assist in the arrest of Robert Minor (Steffens' "Autobiography") and then to Russia, where she met her English friend when they were both locked up by the Soviet secret police. The lives of the autobiographers did not always cross

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n such a melodramatic fashion, but they did cross so frequently that in reading their books you sometimes feel that the world was not so big for them, and that there were not many people in it.

And now that we have their books, their explanations, apologies and their oblique accounts of their private lives to square with the big events of their times, what does their story amount to? The surprising fact that emerges is that the intellectual life of that period had a quality not reflected in its poetry or its fiction or its drama. The intellectuals were all wound up with the world of affairs; their lives were filled with plots and conspiracies and they were in touch with men of affairs, with labor leaders, reform politicians, British agents, revolutionists and big and little capitalists. They knew what was going on behind the scenes, what wires were being pulled and what intrigues worked out. But this familiarity is not echoed in the poetry of the time, in the novels of Anderson or Willa Cather or the plays of Eugene O'Neill. Whatever other qualities these works have, they do not communicate anything like the picture of the teeming political-social world that we find in the autobiographies—in comparison they are pastoral, elegiac, passive. And yet their authors were profoundly aware of the conflicts that surged around them, either because they had been in the fight themselves, as Willa Cather had been at the center of the fight between the muckrakers and McClure, or because they moved in circles where the battles were immediate issues that involved them all.

For the most part the autobiographers were the children of middle-class families, college-educated, nervous, talented and rebellious. The degree of domestic harmony where they grew up seems to have been in inverse proportion to the amount of the family's wealth. Where there was money it came from commercial or industrial enterprises like the stores of Sacramento or the street railways of San Francisco or the steel mills of Buffalo; it was new; there was rarely a long background of accumulation behind it. And these households of wealth or of struggling gentility seem to have been peculiarly designed for terrorizing children, as in Harriet Monroe's aspiring Chicago environment where, when the family's standing declined, the war between the parents echoed a similar conflict going on in the home of Clarence Day in New York, the Steins in San Francisco ("Everybody's Autobiography") the Gansons of Buffalo ("Intimate Memories"), the Masters of Illinois ("Across Spoon River"). Two classic middle-class and lower-middle-class types emerge from these volumes—the blustering and fuming head of the family, as pictured by Clarence Day, a little like Major Hoople, and the pathetic and defeated figures like Upton Sinclair's father, or the father of Sherwood Anderson, who were going downhill fast, knew it, and knew they could not stop their descent.

The education of girls who were born into well-to-do families appears to have left them, until they were well along in years, with almost no idea of what it was all about. Between schools in Europe and visits to wealthy relatives, their girlhoods passed in such complete vacancy, with expectancies so completely foreign to the known hard-bitten world, that their first independent ventures into it had the effect of a blow between the eyes. Most of the autobiographers married young. Several of them married under fantastic circumstances—it may be that some day their stories of their marriages will be of as much interest to social historians as any of their writing.

No American novelist has pictured anything quite like the scene in which Mabel Ganson was tricked into marriage, or the fantastic situation that resulted from Elizabeth Drexel's marriage to Harry Lehr—not that the situations themselves were so extraordinary, but that no American novelist has given us psychological analyses subtle enough to present the mixture of bewilderment and shrewdness apparent in their accounts, or to show feminine rationalizations reaching such a fine point of intricacy. And it is worth noting that in almost every case the lives of the autobiographers have been deflected by some tragic occurrence—the suicide of a young wife, the accidental death of a young husband, a minor illness developing complications—combining to give a sense of violence and brutal hazard under the surface of American life, even among its most sheltered elements. From Steffens' autobiography, through Harriet Monroe's and down to those of Orrick Johns and Harold Stearns, these misfortunes loom as large as personal ambitions in setting the course of careers. Sometimes they are so unexpected as to seem extravagant and almost grotesque, as in Marguerite Harrison's discovery, after the death of her well-to-do Baltimore husband, that he had left debts amounting to $70,000 of which she had not even been aware. I used to think that Dos Passos had loaded the dice a little in terminating the careers of so many of the characters in "U.S.A." in sudden death, but when you look at the record of these fifty lives, and see how large a part such accidents played in them, his proportions seem calculated with almost insurance-company accuracy.

In so far as you can locate a high point in the careers of the writers of these books, it is around 1912. This was a period of sudden change, with marriages breaking up, new literary enterprises springing up all over the place, old friends quarreling and new people abruptly emerging; a time of irrevocable decisions and long journeys, with one group of expatriates returning and another group fleeing to Europe; a period when conflicts that had been put off for a long time, evaded and compromised until they could be dodged no

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longer, suddenly came to a head. There was a kind of mass literary migration to England just before the War—Pound, John Gould Fletcher, Frost, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Amy Lowell, Harriet Monroe, Reedy, Santayana, Harold Stearns and Dreiser headed for London, and Eliot was getting ready to leave Harvard to follow them. And after the general reshuffling—after a dozen new marriages, a dozen divorces, a dozen resignations from jobs that had become exhausting and fruitless (as Dreiser left Butterick's and Willa Cather left McClure's)—something like a fusion of political radicals and advance-guard writers came into existence. The people who were to write their autobiographies became, almost simultaneously, public figures. They had drifted through a period in which they were acutely conscious, the men no less than the women, that their education had not prepared them for the society they had to face; they had, most of them, suffered some shattering personal tragedy; and now they became deeply involved in affairs at the same time that their personal lives were most confused.

This was the period when the McNamara case touched so many of these people, not only Steffens and Darrow, who were, of course, leading figures in it, but Mrs. Luhan, who sheltered one of the dynamiters, and indirectly Edgar Lee Masters, whose conflict with his partner exploded when the partner —who is never named in "Across Spoon River"— "pleaded his clients guilty in the West" and was himself indicted for jury bribing. But even where the issues were less serious the conflicts were savage, and as you read about Amy Lowell's fight with Pound for leadership of the Imagists, or the struggle involved in trying to get Poetry out ahead of rivals, it seems that the picture is essentially the same, and that the poets as well as the reformers had been led to positions from which they could not retreat, and had to form parties, make allies and wield literary power like the ward politicians of their art.

What makes their stories ironic is that they were all involved in fantastic and homely difficulties: Masters in his love affair with a music teacher, which he writes about as if it were a war, preceded by diplomatic negotiations, between two rival powers; Sinclair in the scandal of his divorce plastered over the front pages of the newspapers; Mabel Dodge Luhan in her unhappy love affair with John Reed. The melodrama had its comic sides: Masters, with his head still spinning from his love affair, was badgered by detectives trying to collect evidence against his partner; Amy Lowell became famous when she was caught smoking a cigar. And I do not think there is anything in the fifty volumes to approach Mrs. Luhan's account of a tea that was interrupted by the arrival of one of her house-guests in the drawing-room looking for his wife, "stark naked, his face tense and white."— "It was," she says blandly, "a belated figure of a artist lost to the conscious customs of the world." Th stories of the autobiographer remind you of somethin out of Balzac, and they are like Balzac's character in their combination of practical, hard-headed knowledge of the world and their exuberant romanticism their gestures that seem almost too far-fetched to b believed. The world that they describe has a Balzacia flavor, with its shrewd enemies lying in wait, its harc hearted parents and fights over legacies, its plots an its battles for no mean objectives.

Or, rather, the world that they try to describe. I seems to me that these are the most carelessly writte books of serious literary importance in existence. The are filled with contradictions and unfinished accounts people are brought in as they might be mentioned i letters, and the prose in general is about at the leve of the prose in a dutiful letter to some member of th family. Steffens' "Autobiography" is almost the onl one of them that is organized as a unified study, an even in his book, although it contains good formula tions on politics and a few first-rate characterization there are appalling repetitions and dull passages tha seem to have been included less from a desire to pi ture the times than to make it certain that no on Steffens knew had been left out. But Steffens at lea did not assume to begin with that you had read h previous works, knew him and his friends and th ideas they stood for—errors which in a few years ar going to make memoirs like Carleton Beals's "Gla Houses" and Harold Stearns's "The Street I Know almost incomprehensible. You have to wade throug a great mass of irrelevancies to get the stories out c the autobiographies, and you are likely to be left wo dering at the end that they contain so few memorabl passages, and so few characters clearly presented wit some intimations of their depth and complexity.

But how much life there is in them! And how muc their general picture squares with the world we know The novels of their contemporaries, of Edith Wharto or Willa Cather or—in another sense—of Sherwoo Anderson, shed no such light on the modern worl and give us no such information into the mechanics c our own time. Dreiser does, it is true, but eve Dreiser's novels lack some quality of human no sensical unexpectedness in their characters, as if h people were fitted too tightly into their grooves t wobble around as people do in life and in these record of their lives. But aside from Dreiser our novelist have avoided writing about the social and economi coercions that figure so largely in the autobiographies they have given us almost no accounts of men c affairs or of sustained political and economic conflic With all their dullness, their egotism, their confusion the autobiographies succeed in doing so, and our fictio still has to catch up to them. ROBERT CANTWEL

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Shoot the Works

Columnists v. Editors

THERE USED TO BE an old journalistic rule that newspapermen should not write about each other. This regulation no longer obtains. Indeed a columnist's chief stock in trade seems to be a willingness to speak with great candor about his confrères and competitors.

And there is some justification for departure from the old tradition. Of course even in an earlier age editors did make mention of editors, and not in any favorable manner. If memory serves, there were one or two episodes in which rival proprietors could not contain themselves on the printed page but went storming into the street armed with horsewhips. Things of that sort no longer occur except among the boxing writers.

But if political commentators often take up for criticism the views of other writers rather than the opinions of Senators or Representatives it may well be argued that more political influence lies with the journalists than with the legislators. Certainly three or four well known syndicated columnists wield more influence than the average law-maker in Washington. For instance it seems to me that Miss Dorothy Thompson had a great deal more to do with the defeat of the reorganization measure than any trio of gentlemen in the House.

The way has been cleared for the syndicated columnist by the abdication of American editors. Here and there some old Roman remains who speaks for himself and his newspaper. The name of William Allen White comes to mind. He is still The Emporia Gazette. And William Randolph Hearst, although he hires many special writers, still sets the pace and tone for the editorial position of his newspaper chain.

But consider the case of a paper such as The New York Herald Tribune. It has a vigorous editorial page. No one can reasonably accuse it of not taking sides, or to be more accurate, a side. Moreover, it contains some of the best light editorials which are being printed in America today. But suppose you were running for office in New York and you had your choice of the support of Walter Lippmann and Dorothy Thompson or the editorial page of The Herald Tribune. I maintain that a shrewd politician would take the columnists and let the editorial pages go hang.

I have almost a similar feeling about The New York Times in spite of the fact that this newspaper has discouraged special opinion and attempted to preserve the prestige of the organic whole. Arthur Krock is not a commentator in the same sense as Lippmann. The theory is that in his contributions he explains the news significance of an event and does not render an opinion. However, when Mr. Krock explains some point the reader generally gets an inkling as to what side he is on. Recently Mr. Krock's contributions have been debated in the Congress on several occasions and within my own circle of acquaintances I often hear somebody say, "Did you see Krock's piece in The Times today?" Meaning no disrespect to The New York Times as an organic whole, I seldom encounter anybody who wishes to discuss the paper's leader.

And so it becomes a little outmoded to gather together excerpts from editorial pages after any significant political event. A much better cross-section of the nature of newspaper pressure could be obtained by culling the columnists. This may be even more true in the evening field than in the morning. At least it is my opinion that Westbrook Pegler and General Johnson, either singly or together, carry far more weight with the reader than the official Scripps-Howard editorials ever obtained.

After all the editorial writer starts from behind scratch. His article does not contain a flattering little photograph of himself taken in some happy moment twenty years ago. The columnist for the most part is easier to find and gets a break in having bigger type. Moreover the theory runs, and is often honored in the observance, that the columnist speaks for himself alone without benefit of suggestion or handicap of curtailment. Popular psychology in America prefers to deal with the opinions of identified persons.

The reader knows, or thinks he knows. the character of the columnist to whom he is addicted. And if that same reader knows nothing of the commentator, the columnist will be glad to tell him, for the boys and girls are nothing if not autobiographical. There is, too, a feeling that the unsigned newspaper editorial represents the play of political and economic influences which may be complex and mysterious. Of course the columnist is not a piece of pure plate glass himself. But his interests are not very difficult to define. One generally gets to know where he was born, which college he attended, his taste in literature and beverages. By the simple matter of looking up the income-tax figures the curious may get a moderately accurate idea of his economic status.

One can only guess as to whether the power of the press has increased or decreased since the abdication of the editors. The election of 1936 indicated that a candidate could win against a majority of both editorial pages and commentators combined. Mr. Roosevelt had very little trouble in overcoming the opposition of the Lawrences, Sullivans, Mallons *et al.* Yet on the whole, I think the columnists gave F.D.R. a slightly better break than he received on the editorial pages.

Possibly there is something salutary in transferring so large a portion of the power of the press to men and women who sign their names. But I believe that in the main the development is not a healthy symptom for a free press. Syndication destroys balance. Power is placed with an extremely small group. The passenger who takes a train at Grand Central Station in New York and embarks for San Francisco will find that some half-dozen columnists will follow him every step of the way.

It does not matter whether you agree with these two journalists or any other pair. The reader should have a right to a greater diversity of opinion. I have said in all seriousness that a widely syndicated writer has far more political power than any Senator. Surely no one would deny that Frank Kent is more powerful in shaping public opinion than Rush Holt of West Virginia. Yet much as I deplore what seems to me the meager attainments of Mr. Holt, I must admit that he was elected to his office.

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Frank Kent and none of his colleagues were put in by the voters.

As things stand, America is very largely governed by a little writing oligarchy that is higher than the upper House. It isn't right. And I don't know anything that can be done about it.

HEYWOOD BROUN

Washington Notes

Rainmaker But No Rain

FROM THIS WALLED CITY, it is hard to tell how the country has taken Mr. Roosevelt's defeat on the reorganization bill. Here it is perhaps the most important event since 1932, and its effect is worth reappraisal. It is more important, even, than the defeat of the Supreme Court plan. That came in the Senate, and in an off-year politically. The House members who voted against Mr. Roosevelt two weeks ago must all face their constituencies within six months.

After listening to confused, patently untrue explanations of their votes by various Congressmen, the writer has come to believe that the episode lies outside the realm of rationality. To explain it, you need to retreat to something like Sir James G. Frazer's "Golden Bough." The writer realizes he lays himself open to the accusation of being a double-dome, but, so help him, there is no other way to describe the present feeling in Washington.

As you will recall, Frazer discovered that the chief, king, rainmaker, or whatever he was called, among primitive peoples carried within himself the fortunes of the tribe. He was set about by ceremonial safeguards, and, as long as his power remained intact, the tribe prospered. But if once his power became impaired, he had to be removed, violently or otherwise, or the tribe would suffer.

There is no need to recall how completely Mr. Roosevelt, in his first term, identified himself with the country's material advancement. The writer has chosen to spend his life among Congressmen, and he admires and respects them. But, in all kindness, he is bound to say that the rank-and-file Congressman did not understand—and still doesn't—Mr. Roosevelt's economic measures. He did not understand, for example, the gold-sterilization program or the undistributed-surplus tax. What he did know was that, in dry spells, Mr. Roosevelt would go into a tent, make unintelligible noises and presently there would be rain.

Last September saw the start of the severest dry spell in nine years. Mr. Roosevelt made no move to go into his tent, or reach for the bag of magic feathers. The rank-and-file Congressman jumped to the conclusion that his power was no longer intact. Frazer tells how such contingencies have been met among many native tribes. If an anthropologist could have been present in the House two weeks ago, he would, in the writer's opinion, have seen the United States natives reacting in similar ways.

Among rank-and-file Congressmen, still in the writer's opinion, the dominant feeling is now apprehension. This is irrational. Reactionary Congressmen ought to be elated; liberals ought to be girding themselves for a desperate defense of the Barcelona road. But they are filled with the horrid knowledge that the rainmaker's power has ceased to be perfect.

There is no easy way to resolve their problem. The symbolic repudiation of Mr. Roosevelt by the House members did not visibly touch him. The day afterward he still occupied his lovely oval office in the White House, with its view across the south lawn. He still commanded one of the two chief navies afloat, and was still head of the one of the seven great powers. The writer believes that the Congressmen who voted against the reorganization bill did so from an exaggerated awe of Mr. Roosevelt and his office. When Frazer's savages depose a tribal rainmaker, they do not act from a suspicion that rainmaking in itself is tripe, and that irrigation, soil-conservation, tree-planting, weather-forecasting and stratosphere balloons would serve their purpose better. They act from an intense belief in the rainmaker's function. Hence, in the writer's judgment, the apathy of the rank-and-file of Congress towards the administration's new recovery program. They are being asked to give their interest to limited, matter-of-fact measures at a time when unknown forces beset us. Perhaps Mr. Roosevelt's radio message to the country last week can become a rallying point for liberals. Unless the present feeling in Congress is quickly dissipated, its effect will be bad for the country.

It is a mournful task to assess the damage that the reorganization bill did to the liberal bloc in Congress. Perhaps the goriest episode of the whole nerve-wracking week was the shift of Mr. Boileau and five other Wisconsin Progressives in favor of recommittal and against Mr. Roosevelt. Only one of the Wisconsin group, Mr. Amlie, remained faithful to the New Deal. If Mr. Roosevelt could have had the support of Mr. Boileau and his colleagues, the reorganization bill would have carried by four votes, instead of losing by eight. The Minnesota Farmer-Labor delegation split wide open, Messrs. Kvale and Johnson voting for recommittal. Senator Guffey delivered nineteen of Pennsylvania's twenty-seven Democratic votes, but the Adonis-like Representative Allen, partisan of youth measures and one of the most glittering ornaments of the liberal bloc, voted against the President. So did Mr. Bigelow of Ohio, with a lifetime record of fighting for difficult causes. So did Mr. Ramspeck of Georgia, the man selected by the administration to have charge of the wages-and-hours bill.

The bulk of the liberal group, under Mr. Maverick's leadership, stood firmly with the administration. It was an exhibition of first-rate statesmanship. To most of the members of the group, the wages-and-hours bill is of great importance. They have besought the White House for aid during the present session, and, in the writer's opinion, received it grudgingly. They had no debt to pay to Mr. Roosevelt, and voted as they did because they conceived it their duty. The entire Washington state Democratic delegation voted against recommittal. So did the brilliant California group, Messrs. Voorhis, Scott, Havenner, Izac and Tolan, and Mr. O'Connell of Montana. So did Mr. Wood of Missouri, the A. F. of L. spokesman.

But the fact remains that Wisconsin Progressives, Minnesota Farmer-Laborites and liberals from a half-dozen

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other states thought they could best serve their cause by voting to destroy Mr. Roosevelt's power. Twelve months ago such a vote would have been unthinkable. The wounds it has created in the liberal bloc cannot be easily healed.

Washington T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Favoring the Rich

SURELY no one need be surprised that the inevitable wave of reaction has set in. And no one need arch his eyebrows in further astonishment when this wave of reaction rises in volume and intensity. If anyone doubts this, what sadder evidence of reaction could there be than the Senate's capital-gains-tax amendments to the House bill? It is only a couple of years ago that Congress and the country were howling for the blood of the wealthy, and particularly of the predatory rich. But now, the same men are actually framing a tax law that favors the rich.

The Senate has amended the tax bill in order to make the tax upon capital gains less than the tax upon earned income and to fix a flat rate on such gains while adhering to a progressive rate on earned incomes. If ever the President was on sure ground he was when he sent his letter to the conferees on the tax bill protesting against this indefensible provision. The merchant and manufacturer who embarks his capital in a productive or useful enterprise is taxed at one rate. The fellow who gambles in the evidences of ownership in such an enterprise is taxed at a lower rate. The producer who manufactures goods for the use of the people will pay one kind of tax upon his profits. The stock gambler who speculates in the securities of that enterprise will pay a tax, as the President points out, often as much as 50 percent less than the producer.

There is nothing in the whole range of the present economic system which the financial promoter and his clients—security adventurers of all sorts—are more deeply concerned about than this business of capital gains. It is through capital gains that most fortunes are built up. It is through capital gains that most indefensible fortunes are created—speculative gains of all sorts. Producers of goods generally build their fortunes up slowly, painfully through many years of production and expansion. The speculator builds his swiftly and, most of the time, without making any real contribution to production. It is an extraordinary fact that John D. Rockefeller, when he retired around 1911, was worth perhaps two or three hundred million dollars—a vast fortune, to be sure, but most of it made through the slow, toilsome, expansion of his great industry through reinvestment of its own earnings. It was after he retired that the great bulk of his amazing fortune was made —through the capital-gains road.

The air in Washington is filled with schemes for the extension of government credit to all sorts of enterprises—railroad and industrial. Here again rises one of those disturbing phenomena which have so deeply confused the tortuous progress of the ill starred New Deal. The assumption of the functions of banker by the government is a clearly labeled liberal or progressive, even radical, proposal. The conservative business man or voter is always savagely opposed to the government's entry into the banking business. Indeed there is no form of government intrusion into business which the conservative so bitterly opposes as this, for it is credit which is the first and most cherished instrument of the conservative's wealth. Therefore when you hear men arguing the point whether the government shall turn banker or not, you assume that it is the liberal or radical who supports the affirmative and his conservative opponent who contests the scheme. But like so much else in the history of the New Deal this assumption becomes immediately an instrument for confusing the whole issue. And as soon as some critic rises to oppose the plan for government banking he is put down as a "tory."

Now I happen to be one of those who believe that one of these days the government will have to assume the task of managing the essential function of credit in the economic system. But when that is done I want to see it done intelligently. I want to see it done to serve society and not merely to revive the practically extinct claims of a lot of unlucky investors. I do not want to see the function of banking divided into two sections—one comprehending the sound credits and one including the cats and dogs, with the good credits reserved for the private banking industry and the cats and dogs wished on the government.

Any attempt to put the government into the business of extending credits to private business now will mean that the government will be made the dumping ground for all the bad notes, all the foolish adventures, all the decayed securities, as it has already been made the wastebasket for about five billion dollars of farm and home mortgages, half of which will probably never be collected. Now it is proposed to use the credit of the government to buy worthless and near-worthless railroad securities, to lend hundreds of millions to bankrupt railroads, to lend more hundreds of millions, maybe billions, to business enterprises which no banker in his right mind would accept. If progressive groups permit themselves to be made a screen behind which this crazy scheme is to be pressed, then they must submit to the suspicion that they have as febrile a forgettery and as feeble a learning apparatus as their brothers over on the extreme right.

About a year ago and at intervals since, this column has taken the liberty of warning that the first stratagem of recovery in what might be called the Second Effort would be the spending of the government's gold. This, of course, is the easiest way. And now that course is imminent. I have not agreed with those, like Professor Kemmerer and the late H. Parker Willis, that inflation of the currency would rush upon us instantly after the 1936 elections or that the inflation when it arrived would be one of those wild, runaway things such as amazed and entertained the world when Germany inflated. But if the new spending program and the gold-spending plan get under way along with the President's "1926 price level" plan, we may well be prepared for the onset of a more fundamental inflation and devaluation than the brief credit inflation of 1934 to 1937.

JOHN T. FLYNN

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The Bandwagon

When Anthony Eden resigned as Foreign Minister of the British Empire last month, immediate repercussions were felt in England in the sales of the famous Eden homburg. A report from Glasgow had prices dropping from $5 to 98 cents—but they remained at par in London, said a West End hatter—evidently all is not lost. "It has too much character to be blown off by a political breeze," he explained. . . . It is with sorrow that Men's Wear notes that Mr. Eden's successor, Lord Halifax, wears his homburg with the crown pinched. – *News item in Men's Wear.*

Although Whitney signed a petition in bankruptcy as an individual and as senior partner of his brokerage firm as soon as they were suspended, he asserted yesterday . . . that he would not have considered himself insolvent as long as "we still had the ability to borrow." – *From a news account in The New York Times.*

The translator had made Vittorio Mussolini describe the bombing of the enemy cavalry as "exceptionally good fun." I have myself read the book in question and as a British soldier find the translation, as given, inexact and tendentious. . . . What Vittorio Mussolini does describe is the evident panic and surprise of "these otherwise brave warriors" when the explosive tube, dropped from the air, caused them to scatter to all points of the compass, and he concludes the description of this particular action by saying it was "molto divertente"—which words in my opinion should have been translated "highly diverting" and not as "exceptionally good fun." – *Lt.-Col. Cyril Rocke, former British Military Attaché at Rome, in a letter to the Paris edition of The New York Herald Tribune.*

Mademoiselle from Armentières

The suggestions . . . are offered to Tory youth: There is nothing like the presence of a disapproving cop on horseback to bring a mass meeting to life. . . . If picketing is fun, what is wrong with anti-picketing? . . . Politics is the most fascinating and maddening of hobbies that a young woman can adopt—more gregarious than society, more energetic than skiing, more intellectual than bridge, more emotional than a love affair. – *Gretta Palmer, in an article for the magazine Mademoiselle.*

They Also Serve

The Reichstag is the only legislative assembly in Germany; Hitler calls it to hear important pronouncements. – *Associated Press dispatch from Berlin, published in The Washington Post.*

The Phantom of the Opera

It is Nelson Eddy's wont to reveal himself once a year to his Chicago followers. As he stood on the stage of the Civic Opera house last night, a soft light turned his hair to an unearthly gold and shone mystically on his upturned, inscrutable face. – *An item in The Chicago Tribune.*

Two-Birds-with-One-Stone Department

Thank God, that, on the other hand, there is a crusading, constructive press in Chicago that is fighting against syphilis and the traffic dangers that can be cured by superhighways. – *Mayor Kelly of Chicago, quoted in The Chicago Daily News.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

From a Catholic

SIR: Count me among those Catholics who do not think that Franco, the Barcelona Bomber, is the savior of Christianity. If the killing of women and children is done in the cause of Christianity, then I'll take Voodooism. Another thing. The veto of the McNaboe-Devaney bill last week by Governor Lehman was criticized by The Brooklyn Tablet (page one) in two whole columns. "Governor's Action Is Called Example of Fascism," reads a subhead. Well, supposing the Governor did sign the bill, and the Communists objected. They would, of course, be told to go back where they came from; or better yet, under the provisions of the bill, they could be imprisoned. But that wouldn't be fascism; no, that would be something called "the orderly process of democratic government." The Communists happened to be on the right side of the fence this time, which is not at all unusual when you consider the law of averages. But The Tablet quotes part of a speech by Charles Krumbein, New York State Secretary of the Communist Party, who praised the veto. The obvious attempt was to show that the bill MUST have been good if the Communists didn't like it. Well, I wonder how many Irish-Catholics like myself would give up eating potatoes if they found out that the Communists liked them, too. How many would veto the vegetable? And I wonder how many feel as I do, that the Church and State should be separated—and I do mean definitely!

Brooklyn, N. Y. CHARLES O'CONNOR

The Perils of Poetry

SIR: As one who enjoys The New Republic and thoroughly approves of its attitude on political and economic topics, let me express my hearty agreement with Mr. W. J. Dudgeon's remarks in the issue of February 2 regarding the alleged "poetry" upon which you are wasting valuable space. . . .

Los Angeles, Calif. HAROLD FISK

SIR: Please lend your ears to a fervent amen to the sentiments expressed by Mr. Dudgeon *in re* certain New Republic verse. Of course he would include in his admirable castigation, much of the same vague stuff appearing today in other journals—lines comprehensible, as in ultra-modern art, only by the composers themselves.

Your cogently written and incontrovertible social, political and economic theses find no sincerer support anywhere, I am sure, than in me. . . .

Greensburg, Pa. JOHN R. KEISTER

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SIR: While we enjoy your very proper criticisms of raggedy jazz in music and of cubist freakishness in painting, we are puzzled that a corresponding excrescence in literature should find its way into the valuable columns of The New Republic. . . .
Syracuse, N. Y. PETER J. SCHLOSSER

SIR: I know nothing about poetry and care less for its artistic merits but I do enjoy certain poems and have keenly missed those of the type The New Republic offered for about ten years after it started. . . . My change in point of view with years cannot entirely account for my exasperation over the type of poetry the magazine now contains.

To me these poems seem symptomatic of . . . such serious maladjustments in the writers that treatment and not publication is clearly indicated. With accessibility of modern methods such as fever therapy and insulin shock treatment, it seems inexcusable for some of the selections to get into print. . . . A certain swing of mood is common to all so-called normal individuals so that lines written in despair or distraction of a certain degree of severity may be pleasing aids to one's own effort at expression; but a limit should be set. . . . I do not pine for the classics, but I do sometimes feel a little hungry for a few neat lines from someone with a gift for expression and something to express that falls within the range of my own experience. Does no one now feel an urge to express in words some of the rich emotions a passably normal individual may have even while men are blowing each other's brains out in the next block?
New Haven, Conn. MILDRED H. CLARK

Brickbats for Broun—

SIR: I am interested in the psychology of it—why does Heywood Broun violate all his past promise of being a person with decent instincts, a sound heart which steered him pretty true? . . . The article of March 26 in The New Republic is vicious and libelous. . . . I like him and I care.
New York City HOWARD KING

SIR: In the minds of Mr. Broun and the Communist Party all those who are opposed to the policies of the latter are disruptive and enemies of the labor movement. . . . Why doesn't your esteemed contributor give his readers an honest statement of the position of the Trotskyites on this or that question?
Brooklyn, N. Y. H. LEVINE

SIR: When Mr. Broun, hiding behind the tattered mask of disinterested liberalism, sinks to the depths illustrated by his attack on "Trotskyism" (broadly defined by Mr. Broun as any deviation from the Communist Party's line) in the issue of March 23, and now on Norman Thomas, that is too much. . . .

Broun has referred to Thomas as "strictly a gymnasium fighter." That gymnasium must be one on wheels and open on all sides. It has found its way to Tampa, Florida, where almost single-handedly Norman Thomas fought the murder of Joseph Shoemaker by the Ku Klux Klan and made the case a national issue. . . . That "gymnasium" found its way to Arkansas and Tennessee, where Mr. Thomas, in danger of life and limb, helped to build the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. . . . Because I still remember the Heywood Broun who waged a valiant fight for Sacco and Vanzetti, and once winged his arrows against the war-mongers, let me give him a friendly admonition. "Get into Mr. Thomas' kind of gymnasium, Heywood, before all hope for your recovery is gone."
New York City AGNES MARTOCCI

SIR: . . . After confessing complete ignorance about Trotskyism, the Moscow Trials and what Trotskyists in this country are doing, Broun holds that this term affords a convenient label for damning those we don't like. This manifestly is an inverted . . . form of Red-baiting, and a libel against the fair names of hundreds of honest persons—regardless of how correct or mistaken their views may be.
Lakewood, N. J. W. F. BRADFORD

SIR: The letter from Maurice Hindus about Eugene Lyons and Heywood Broun's piece about Trotskyism are so excellent and timely, couldn't they be made into a pamphlet for wide distribution?
Vergennes, Vt. (MRS.) HARRIET W. PATTERSON

SIR: In speaking of Norman Thomas as "strictly a gymnasium fighter," I had, of course, no intention of reflecting on his courage. The misapprehension rises in the minds of those who are not versed in the colloquialisms of the prize ring. The more familiar phrase is that One Round X "left his fight in the gymnasium." This does not mean that One Round is lacking in belligerence. He has trained too hard. In practice he has perfected a system of offense and defense. When he actually comes up against his adversary he is too doctrinaire in sticking to his preconceived notions. In that sense I still maintain that Norman Thomas is "strictly a gymnasium fighter."
Stamford, Conn. HEYWOOD BROUN

—And Some for Bliven

SIR: . . . Bruce Bliven certainly gave that "Letter to Stalin" (The New Republic, March 30) a real O. Henry climax. I found it in that courageous and well formulated fourth point. Why do I say courageous? Because this is, I believe, the first and only time I have seen a man of his caliber come out for a plan suggesting that the state help its wreckers and spies to organize their work and, furthermore, declare their activities legal. Make them immune from all opposition! I would have added the following postscript: if you follow this course of action, Hitler and Mussolini will also become amicable. They will know that their agents now have your (Stalin's) help and guidance.
Hibbing, Minn. EINO KRAPU

SIR: The impudence of Bruce Bliven is colossal. To think that a citizen of the most violent nation on earth (some 10,000 persons were done to death in the United States during this past year by various kinds of homicide, some 40,000 by insane speed and another 10,000 by industrial accidents most of which were preventable; and since 1885 about 5,000 persons were lynched by mobs) should reproach the nation that has accomplished the greatest victories over most kinds of violence that have ever been recorded is enough to make the gods laugh most heartily. . . . Does Mr. Bliven not understand that the Russian state is not political but coöperative, receiving its mandates, not from a "dictator" but, as the Webbs say, from the people through constant conferences and committee meetings, and that there is no more sense in having an "opposition" than there would be to tolerate one in one of our coöperative societies.
Minneapolis, Minn. E. DUDLEY PARSONS

SIR: In view of certain doubts and misgivings with regard to the Soviet Union which The New Republic has recently expressed, I am moved to make some equally concrete proposals for changes in its editorial policy. It would run much less risk of being misunderstood by the citizens of the Soviet Union if it were published in the Russian language. . . . It occurs to me that the material presented in your pages would be accepted in better faith if each issue were accompanied by a stenographic report of the editorial conferences in which it was prepared. . . . I should like to see the complete abolition of the rejection slip in your offices. The New Republic claims to be a journal of opinion; everybody has some opinion, and a really democratic

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magazine will give everybody an opportunity to express that opinion. . . . Finally, I would recommend that Bruce Bliven retire from active editorship for a period of eighteen months. Why, you will ask, for only eighteen months? Well, that I can't answer.

Orlando, Fla. RICHARD GREENLEAF

SIR: Bruce Bliven's letter to Joseph Stalin, I am sure most of you will agree, is not designed to appeal to any sober-minded college student or instructor. It is the cheekiest, most quixotic and irresponsible bit of arrogancy I've ever seen in a progressive journal of opinion. . . .

Bronx, N. Y. PAUL FUCHS

SIR: . . . I suppose Mr. Bliven feels that he is doing the world a good turn. What he has actually done is helped to increase the confusion of the confused in the face of world fascism. I think it is safe to say that in Spain intellectuals of the Bliven stamp have become extinct. Fascist bombs are pretty persuasive. No matter how far short the Soviet Union may fall from being a Utopia, it is still hated to the point of insanity by Hitler, Mussolini, the Catholic hierarchy and our own Wall Street. For my part, I could ask for no better recommendation. . . .

Gloversville, N. Y. WALTER MORRIS

SIR: In his letter to Joseph Stalin, Bruce Bliven urges upon Stalin a revision of policy "to take account of world opinion." Will you permit me to advise Mr. Bliven that he is mistaking the cackling of a few so-called liberal geese for the voice of world opinion? . . .

New York City ISIDOR EDELMAN

SIR: I find myself ready to agree with all four of Bruce Bliven's well meaning suggestions. . . . I even have no serious objections to that fifth "spare wheel" of his (having Stalin withdraw for a year or eighteen months). What I find pathetic is that he seems so little aware how the tone in which he words these suggestions will seem not only to all Russians but also to most Europeans, filled with an Anglo-Saxon and American bias to the point of seeming pitiably provincial. . . . If I happen to hold the same four or five points of view that he does, I recognize that they are in me the result of a certain inheritance, environment, education and training. It would never occur to me to take them as the measure of millions of men with a different inheritance, environment, education and training; to judge them by their similarity to me, or naïvely to ask them to change their methods so as to suit my prejudices. . . . I am pleased to see that Mr. Bliven recognizes Stalin's willingness to make alliances with other countries "whatever their form of government." I feel that we too should be willing to make alliances with the Soviets "whatever their form of government."

Cambridge, Mass. H. W. L. DANA

I am disturbed by these letters but not in the way that my correspondents obviously hope. I am disturbed because most of them seem to me to be living in a dream world with no relation to reality—a world in which the Soviet Union has a magical, mystical quality so that nothing can harm it while at the same time no one must utter a word about it except of abject flattery. Does it really matter nothing to my correspondents whether Soviet Russia loses the friendship of France, England and the United States? Do they really believe she is so invincible that her soldiers can win if they are called upon to fight simultaneously without any allies against Japan, Germany and Italy? This kind of mystical nonsense is not talked in Moscow, I am sure, where Stalin, Litvinov and other leaders take a sober and intelligent view of their military and political problems.—B. B.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Melville Kress of Neville Island, Pennsylvania, wants to know "will you permit a workingman to enter a few protests?" Certainly. He finds a sentence in F.O. Matthiessen's review of Edmund Wilson's "The Triple Thinkers" [The New Republic, April 6] that doesn't seem to mean much: "Babbitt's hard and dour mind . . . confronted moral issues with a centralized grasp that makes much of Chapman's intransigence seem merely willful." He says it has as little meaning as Edmund Wilson himself in talking about "the Russians' national tendency to lie." . . . Mr. W. R. Griffin of Oklahoma City doesn't like George Soule's objection to the term "death instinct" in his review of Dr. Karl Menninger's "Man Against Himself" [The New Republic, March 2]. People do die, he reminds Mr. Soule. He doesn't like people to hang that fact on the social order either. . . . Jack Bregman of New York City says there is no excuse for the weather at all, and urges New Republic readers to write their Congressmen.

Beatrice Russell of the American Library Association Bulletin, Chicago, hopes people will get behind the congressional move to put into effect the recommendation of the President's Advisory Committee on Education. "For the first time a real attack is being made on the rural reading problem of the forty million people without library service." . . . A bill is before Congress to revise the army record of Edward Zepp, who writes us saying he will still take up arms to defend his country but conscientiously objected to fighting a foreign war in 1918 and was "dishonorably discharged." He wants the record changed to plain "discharged" as a vindication and a reminder to citizens of the draft age at this time.

Miriam Steinberg sends in news about a campaign fought by the Teachers' Union, Local 5, New York City, to work out a decent status for the substitute teachers. The cardinal points are that substitute-teacher and teacher-in-training categories be done away with; that substitutes of three years' satisfactory standing be placed on List A for appointment; that elementary and junior-high-school teachers with a year's satisfactory experience be exempted from oral and interview tests and placed, with all new examinees, on List B, appointments to be made alternately from both lists.

Emily Bax of New York City wants everybody to know about the Holiday Fellowship Association of England, which runs guest-houses in Britain's Beauty Spots on a coöperative basis.

What's on the Air?

George Bernard Shaw and spokesmen for the British Foreign Office talk, Friday, April 22, 9:15 A.M., CBS.

Sherwood Eddy, B. Charney Vladeck and Bruce Bliven speak at a League for Industrial Democracy luncheon, Saturday, April 23, 1:30 P.M., NBC-Red Network.

Anthony Eden will speak at a Royal Banquet, Tuesday, April 26, 3:35 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Interviews with Young Workers in Modern Industrial Chemistry, Friday, April 29, 2:30 P.M., CBS.

Dramatic and musical programs of the week include: Orson Welles presents scenes from "Julius Caesar," on the Shakespear Birthday Program, Saturday, April 23, 6:45 P.M., CBS; Sir Cedric and Lady Hardwicke in a Columbia Workshop program, Saturday, April 23, 7:30 P.M., CBS. George Jean Nathan presents the Drama Critics' Circle award for the best play of the current season, Sunday, April 24, 10:30 P.M., NBC-Red Network. The New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, with John Barbirolli conducting, plays Sunday, April 24, 3 P.M., CBS.

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Spring Book Section

Peggy Bacon: Poet with Pictures

IN NO FIELD do fashions and cliques play a more important role than in that of verse-reviewing. A writer who belongs to no group and has no connection with any fashion is likely not to get much reviewed, let alone given a place in the anthologies. It would not be true to say that Peggy Bacon has not been appreciated and praised: her caricatures, her prints and her children's books have brought her a considerable reputation; but her volumes of pictures and verse, which contain some of the best of her work, have received almost no attention.

Miss Bacon has published two of these collections: "Animosities" (Harcourt, Brace, $2.50) and "Cat-Calls" (Robert M. McBride, $2.50). Here the verses help the drawings out, and we feel that we are getting her essence, as with her prints, her pastels and her paintings, we do not always do. The best of her prints and her bigger drawings are of course incomparable: she is, I suppose, the first woman artist successfully to invade the field of Hogarth, Goya and Daumier. But the Hogarthian subjects she attempts sometimes stagger a very feminine talent: where Hogarth will organize a crowded print around a center of point and light that throws the whole picture into perspective, the larger groups of Peggy Bacon sometimes seem to get beyond her control and to coalesce in darkness and indistinctness; and in those of her larger productions where only a few figures are framed, she sometimes leaves great spaces of baldness which overbalance the wit of the rest. But these small drawings which illustrate her verses seem to me almost always quite perfect. They are as compact as medals of Pisanello, as clear and sharp as figures by Callot.

Her verses have not always quite this sharpness. They are sometimes a little amateurish. But they are original both in accent and in pattern. They possess the immense distinction of not having been produced synthetically, as so much contemporary poetry is. And the work in her second volume shows an improvement over that of the first: in "Cat-Calls" there begin to appear, among the satirical sketches and the epigrams, short lyrics—"Autumn Burden" and "Illusion"—which, in spite of some inexpert passages that a little more care would correct, find new words for personal moods. All the work in these books of Miss Bacon's has the mark of the authentic artist in that it does not derive from the desire to produce an impression for its own sake but to pursue as its primary object what the writer really feels and thinks.

At first glance, these pictures and verses may seem waspish and a little morose. But the more one reads them, the more one comes to appreciate their marvelous delicacy and fancy, their dryness, their elegance, their point—till they have become permanent sources of pleasure. This is the poetry of the ugly, the inadequate, the sordid, the ridiculous, the sad, but all distilled to a new felicity; it is the poetry of the pastoral suburban, the middle-class domestic, and the animal and human young, but never kewpified or jollified or arch. The children are untidy and tend to be bad; the pets are dogs and cats, nothing more: they are never complicated by human attributes, but nobody has ever been more sensitive than Peggy Bacon in catching the phases of real dog and cat natures. Mama and Papa are none too handsome and none too smartly dressed, and the sitting-room where they read in the evenings is furnished in none too good taste. At the party, the women get rather silly; and the men are rather wistful old stuffed shirt-fronts. In the city, the houses are dingy, the kids dirty and the cats thin; an old horse has his nose in a feed-bag while the sparrows pick up the crumbs. In the towns, there are timid young ladies who peek out through the slits in the shutters and disdainful old parties in large mansions who think nobody else lives on their street. In the country, the sun is rising on people asleep in their houses, who, when they awake, will be amazed to confront one another and obliged to refocus their sight. In the fields, an old stump, an old shack falling down, a scarecrow with a woman's old dress and hat that rather tends to attract the crows. A tumbler and pills on a sick person's table; abandoned blocks and dolls on the floor; a pet bird that has turned up its toes and that will have to be buried in a candy-box. The old deformed and run-down shoes on the shelf in the cobbler's shop; the bald tailor, intent in his basement, driving his needle into somebody else's coat:

> The blackmailer
> slew the jailer
> —some distress
> and a scrap of crêpe—
> there is no jailer
> to watch the tailor,
> but nevertheless
> he can't escape.

And among all these are posted here and there simple and wholesome objects: a fine little glass of red wine in the center of a scalloped doily; a narrow old-fashioned clock with pointed mahogany columns; a good plate of meat, peas and potatoes, with the heel of a loaf of white bread, a napkin and a mug of milk; a toy top, tipping but fixed, spinning on a point like an etcher's tool; and a hand with long craftsman's fingers, deliberately threading a needle or holding up a spiky shell to an ear. Against all that is imperfect and dismal, such symbols of soundness stand: the symbols of food and work, of steadiness opposed to time and movement.

This is what the life of art ought to be. What it ought not to be is rhetoric, personal or esthetic. The trifles of Peggy Bacon, like La Fontaine's fables, wear well and come to mean more the longer we know them.

EDMUND WILSON

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There Have to Be Censors

THE ARGUMENTS FOR and the arguments against the political censorship of works of art both seem to me substantially unassailable.

On the affirmative side there is one argument that is a basis for all the others and even makes them superfluous. Art does affect society. That is, it affects people by changing their standards of value or heightening their emotions, and thus helps to determine their future actions. It used to be argued that art existed in its own world and had no practical results of any sort; but that was in the days before the movies were really popular and before the law-enforcement agencies had a chance to observe that certain types of pictures—desperado, gangster, racketeer and "snatch"—had an almost statistical effect on the prevailing types of crime.

After such evidence began to accumulate, the art-for-art-sakers shifted their arguments. Some of them tried to make a distinction between the "lower" arts and the "higher" arts, placing the movies, popular songs, illustrations and cartoons on the one side, and novels, plays, poems, symphonic music and painting on the other. The "lower" arts were the only ones that affected practical life and hence the only ones rightly subject to censorship. But this is a distinction that, in practice, is very hard to enforce—especially since a movie may be higher art than the play or novel from which it was made. Political cartoons and murals may be done by the same man, and it has often happened that the cartoons were better esthetically than the murals. And why should we choose to believe that great novels—to mention only one of the "higher" arts—have no effect in action? That such effects may be subtle and long delayed and even quite opposite to those intended by the author—as in the case of Dostoevsky, whose anti-revolutionary novels helped to inspire the Russian revolutionists—is no excuse for denying their existence. Artists in general should object to being told that their patient efforts to formulate ideas and transmit emotions are absolutely fruitless, by definition. They have nothing to gain by a theory that offers them a degree of irresponsible freedom at the price of their being regarded as harmless people, quite beneath the notice of the state.

But if artists are not harmless or helpless, then society has the right to judge their work by its effects, to encourage it, guide it into new channels and even suppress it if its effects are evil. Indeed, that right has always been exercised, and I should guess that it will be more widely exercised in the future. Planned social controls are becoming always more elaborate and are being extended into fields that used to be ruled by custom or chance or whim. Censorship is one control among many, and it is likely to grow like traffic regulations.

Not without well grounded opposition. . . . Although justified in theory, censorship has in practice been harmful not only to the arts but often to the general social structure as well. I don't want to repeat the familiar arguments against it, some of which should be questioned. It is said, for example, that censorship defeats itself by calling attention to the books it wants to suppress. That statement may apply to partial or ineffective censorships, but not to those enforced by the new fascist states. Nor is it true that censorship is always stupid. In Soviet Russia it has been both popular and intelligent in its aims, but that has not made it ideal for the artists who work under its direction. Dr. Kurt London's book on "The Seven Soviet Arts," reviewed here two weeks ago, suggested without directly stating a new line of attack.

Briefly, censors and artists can never understand each other because they speak different languages. The censors may be conservative or radical, ignorant or learned, but in any case their language is that of political logic, which is based on what used to be called "the intellect" and is now described as the conscious mind. The arts are based on it too, in large part, but they also depend on something that used to be called "the instincts" or "the passions"; it is now described as the unconscious. There is no way of forcing the two into agreement at any given time. The result, under an effective censorship, is a whole series of difficulties and real disasters.

Both the censors and the political critics make demands that many artists cannot honestly fulfill. Often their arguments are so persuasive that the artists assent with their intellects; but unless they assent with their instincts as well, their work will be either shallow and mediocre, written off the top of their minds, or else it will have what the Soviet critic Yuri Yuzovsky calls a "subtext" conveying a meaning opposite to that which was consciously intended. The censors think politically, in terms of the present situation, whereas the artists have to feel chiefly in terms of the past. This means that in Russia the party press now calls for books dealing with Stakhanovism or counter-espionage or the Second Five Year Plan, whereas the artists, moving more slowly, have not yet digested the First Five Year Plan, not to speak of the revolution itself. The censors want effects that are measurable and immediate; they tend to disparage the books whose influence is exerted over long periods, deeply rather than broadly. They reward those works of art that comply with their instructions; in other words, they often reward mediocrity and favor the careerists and politicians of art at the expense of the honest artists. As for the people at large, they will get the books and pictures that the censorship thinks is good for them. But the censorship may be quite as mistaken about the psychology of the audience as about the psychology of the artist—with the result that the art it recommends for making people happy may simply bore them or rouse them to revolt.

The arguments for and against censorship are convincing on both sides, and I can see no logical solution to the dilemma that they pose. Should we simply abolish censors? That experiment was tried in Germany just after the War, but it was not successful. Outside of its practical effects on the public order it would have a theoretical weakness, in that artists would be the only members of society permitted to influence others without being controlled or influenced in their turn. Should we say that only moral as opposed to political censorship can be justified? It would be hard to distinguish between them in a world where every department of life is becoming part of politics. Ireland has a censorship that is supposed to be purely moral, but besides being stupid and oppressive it is rapidly assuming a political nature. Should we then insist on having intelligent censors? They might be worse for artists than the stupid ones, who in practice have a lot to recommend them. Intelligent censors

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in Tsarist Russia would have suppressed Dostoevsky's novels instead of allowing them to affect the ideals of a whole generation. What then? Should we say that a censorship is justified so long as it is imposed by our own party and agrees with our own ideals? That might be satisfactory for the present, and necessary too, in revolutionary conditions. But it is certain to weaken the artists of the future by suppressing that conflict among theories and methods and purposes of art out of which the future is born.

My own humble suggestion is that although the dilemma cannot be solved in theory it might conceivably be solved in practice. Instead of trying to end the conflict between artists and censors, let us regard it as normal and even desirable. Let us say that both sides are right, not in any particular skirmish but in the battle as a whole. The censors are right in attacking books and pictures which they regard as immoral or subversive. The artists are right in counter-attacking the censors and in fighting not only to save but to widen their own freedom of expression. There is no final decision to be reached, but there is a temporary stability to be achieved as the result of struggle. . . . This, I might add, is not a utopian proposal. It is a fairly accurate description of what has happened in several democratic countries, including our own, when the artists were strong enough to fight for their privileges.

MALCOLM COWLEY

Grim Interlude

Journeys Between Wars, by John Dos Passos. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 394 pages. $3.

BECAUSE HE IS NATURALLY CULTIVATED, has "character" and a sense of history, John Dos Passos' novels have been more significant than those of his American contemporaries, even those among them who write better than he does. The novelists of our young modern school, though tough-minded, generally have little philosophy with which to guide or console themselves. This Dos Passos has; and his special virtues make him even more at home in the travel book than in the novel.

The truly great travel books have not been written by athletes who vaulted over the Himalayas or slew elephants with slingshots; they have been done by footloose sages, pale, paunchy or myopic, who mainly toured the beaten track, and brimmed over with table-talk, fresh observations and ideas. The travel writer, in truth, holds an advantage over the novelist. Whereas the latter must call forth the geography and the characters that appeal to his temperament by the muscles of the imagination, the former need only buy a ticket or a Cook's Tour to those very places and invite his soul without restriction and without pretense. Dos Passos, as a traveler, is always himself, whether in some bright-lit street of Paris, or in a caravan en route to Damascus. New costumes, landscapes, social orders, draw him on; among them he discovers, with a sustained curiosity, the eternally human, the commonplace, the universal.

He loves people, and this leads him to listen to them devotedly and set them down, as they are, in quick living portraits. His taste for history leads him also to the places where things are happening under the surface, where revolutions are in the making, or have burst into civil war. For revolutions and wars, nowadays, spread along the beaten track.

"Journeys Between Wars" is made up in large part of generous selections from earlier travel books, "Orient Express" (1926), and "In All Countries" (1934), which contained some of the most spirited writing Dos Passos has done, and some accurate prophecy as well. In addition there is an important concluding section which treats of Spain revisited in 1937. The present book thus has a strongly historic flavor. Of Spain, for instance, which Dos Passos loves and interprets well, you have contrasting pictures: under Alfonso, under the Republic of Honest Men (1931), and in time of civil war.

The last time that the traveler returns from Spain, he seems shaken in all his being, tormented, pessimistic. He feels convinced that the good defenders of the Popular Front republic are being oppressed not only by evil Fascists but by the inexorable law of war itself. As he takes inventory of the appalling tragedy, he has time to note that civil liberties are being hemmed in by military discipline, that Trotskyites are being "liquidated." His parting thought—and it offers little hope to those who enlisted "for the duration," in Spain or elsewhere—is: "How can they win? How can the new world full of confusion and cross purposes and illusions and dazzled by the mirage of idealistic phrases win against the iron combination? . . . " These lines, it must be added, are written in great emotion, like an involuntary cry of despair.

The times are trying enough; and it is not surprising that a man like Dos Passos, returning from Spain, should give way to pessimism. But it has been said also (by Edmund Wilson) that Dos Passos is now reconciled to being, or has found himself at heart, "a middle-class liberal." This, if true, is uncommonly interesting. Dos Passos has always been extremely independent and keen-sighted; and possibly he may be right once more. But the course of middle-class liberalism, as exemplified, for instance, by the pernickety difficulties of Mr. Roosevelt, does not run smoother or offer any happier solutions than any other program we have heard of. Nor does the experience of Spain's liberal middle-class republic of 1931 remove one's misgivings.

The curious thing is that no one has given us a more striking warning of the dread fate which overtakes innocent, bewildered, middle-class liberals than Dos Passos himself in this very book, in those mocking pictures of "The Republic of Honest Men," which he wrote in Madrid in 1933. Here, as he said, were the politics of "moderation and ponderation"; here were the liberals of the Ateneo, inviting in "the now republican Civil Guard and the now republican General Sanjurjo" to help them keep law and order and property. Here in short were liberals, and even trade-unionists and socialists, happily parading in honor of their republic, "as innocent as a flock of sheep in the wolf country." And by 1937 the outcome of so much moderation and trustfulness was tragic enough to breed despair even in so stout a fellow as Dos Passos.

If middle-class liberalism doesn't work any better, we may have to seek refuge or forgetfulness in good books. But then the discomforting thought comes that books are no refuge after they are burned.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

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Drang Nach Osten

The German Octopus: Hitler Bids for World Power, by Henry C. Wolfe. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 328 pages. $2.50.

BAGDAD is as far from Berlin as Magnitogorsk. Kharkov is only half as far. The Ukraine is both more accessible and more attractive to Hitler, Rosenberg and Ribbentrop than Iraq. The Nazi road to the east branches on the lower Danube. To the east and north are Hungary and Rumania, with the black earth of the USSR beyond. To the east and south lie Bulgaria and Turkey, with the Persian Gulf and India beyond. If the legions of the swastika take the right fork, the British Empire will be threatened but the Soviet Union may menace the flank of the Nazi crusaders. If they take the left fork, the Soviet Union will be threatened and the Nazi flank will be protected. Tory Britain will stand aside benevolently if Berlin marches east by north instead of east by south.

This march, however, is not for tomorrow, but for the day after tomorrow. Yesterday was Austria. Today is Czechoslovakia, which must be crushed before the path to the lower Danube is free. The plan of campaign is clearly set forth in "Mein Kampf" and in Rosenberg's "Mythos." It has been exposed and commented upon, sensationally or soberly, by many observers: Ernst Henri, M. W. Fodor, F. Elwyn Jones, John Gunther and others. No one need claim ignorance when *Der Tag* dawns.

Henry C. Wolfe's contribution to this literature is brilliant journalism of the first order. Mr. Wolfe knows Danubia, Balkania and the Balticum. He knows the men and movements of Central and Southeastern Europe. He writes vividly, accurately, clearly. He has less gossip than Fodor but better organization. He has fewer picturesque phrases than Gunther but better analysis. He has fewer excursions and alarums than Henri and fewer statistics than Jones. His book perhaps deserves a place beside Edgar A. Mowrer's "Germany Puts the Clock Back" (1932) as a masterpiece of shrewd observation and far-sighted description of tragic Europa under the shadow of the *Hakenkreuz*. John Chamberlain rightly declares in his Foreword that it is the "must" book of the day.

Such a volume should be read, not summarized. It has a thesis that is sound. It has maps that are illuminating. And it has anecdotes, which are good, of Rumanian Premiers murdered, of Danzig Socialists threatened with death, of spies and terrorists and strategists and of all the mad intrigue and barbaric dreams of conquest that spell inevitable war. The thesis has been fully confirmed by events since mid-February, when Mr. Wolfe went to press. It is the thesis that the Third Reich will rule or ruin the Continent. The deeper roots of Nazi imperialism are not here dissected. But the goals and methods are set forth more fully and more lucidly than ever before. Hitler's road to war is traced through Denmark, the Baltic States, Poland, Hungary, Jugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. Czechoslovakia is "next prey." The author's question mark after the phrase is unnecessary. Hitler's road is a one-way street.

Mr. Wolfe forecasts general war for 1939 or 1940 at the latest. The present reviewer leans toward a somewhat earlier date, but all prophecy is guesswork. If Paris and Moscow defend Prague, conflict will come this year. If they do not, France is doomed to ultimate destruction and war will come when the Reichswehr marches against Russia. Despite the fall of Tukhachevsky and Blomberg, Wolfe believes there is still a possibility of a Soviet-Nazi *modus vivendi* whereby Berlin's target may become Bagdad and the British Empire in the Near East rather than Ukrainia and the Caucasus. This appears improbable. What is not open to question is that the Nazi dictatorship is a new Samson quite capable of destroying the temple. "If we lose," Wolfe quotes a high Nazi as saying, "our defeat will drag all Europe down into the abyss with us."

FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN

A Conservative Testifies

Burgos Justice: A Year's Experience in Nationalist Spain, by Ruiz Vilaplana. Translated by W. Horsfall Carter. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 241 pages. $2.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS DOCUMENT lies in the fact that its author is so obviously sympathetic with the Catholic Church, so obviously naïve in his political thinking, so obviously a moderate, and so obviously content to analyze the conflict in terms that among the Spanish middle classes—as among the middle classes of any country, I guess—pass for "noble sentiments" and "clear" and "correct thinking." Set down by a conservative, his story achieves implications that it would lack had it been written by anyone close to the ideals of the Spanish masses or deeply identified with their revolutionary aims.

Ruiz Vilaplana was a sort of chief court clerk and coroner of Burgos—Secretario del Juzgado de Instrución de Burgos, is the Spanish title of his job. For reasons about which he is quite candid, he decided to remain at his post when the rebellion broke out—he was, at its beginnings, mildly sympathetic with the so-called "nationalist" movement, and he hoped, should it triumph, to be promoted and transferred to Madrid, "the goal of ambition." But a year of Burgos under the defenders of civilization against the red hordes was enough for him.

His records of "unidentified" men found dead in the surrounding country mounted higher and higher. These unfortunates remained usually "unidentified"; their relatives did not dare to acknowledge them, for fear of meeting the same fate. Also the presence of Italians and Germans in Rebel Spain was the source of very bitter humiliation to Spaniards like Ruiz Vilaplana. For the "nationalist" super-patriots, the generals who are saving Spain from the Spanish masses, have depended almost entirely on Moorish, German and Italian aid. These patriots have not only prostrated themselves before their helpers, but have put everything they control—and in Rebel Spain they control everything but their foreign helpers—at the disposal of the arrogant Nazis and boastful Black Shirts. Even their own women have been offered to the foreigners. Ruiz Vilaplana, shaken already by the thousands of crimes that he had to record and keep still about, decided to flee across the border. As Elliot Paul says in a brief foreword, this is one of the "few honest books which cannot be ignored."

ELISEO VIVAS

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The Collected Cummings

Collected Poems, by E. E. Cummings. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 320 pages. $3.

AFTER READING and rereading more than three hundred of E. E. Cummings' poems, I could not help wishing that the present volume at its reasonable price had appeared ten years ago. To anyone who remembers reading Mr. Cummings' verse in separate volumes or in magazines there are overtones of regret for what once seemed impudent and fashionable, young and fresh and gay. Even now, the book is good to have at hand, yet the event of its publication, the real event it might have been, seems to have missed the boat.

Too many of Mr. Cummings' early critics discouraged readers by overrating the importance of his typographical diversions, which, after all, are no more or less than the legitimate devices of poetic inversion and transposition. Mr. Cummings is perhaps the most conventional of contemporary poets, and much of his wit, however pertinent or trivial, depends upon our appreciation of grammatical conventions. We recall that his "beautiful Warren Gamaliel Harding" was

> the only man woman or child who wrote
> a simple declarative sentence with seven grammatical
> errors.

Even today the highly conventional nature of his lyricism is not fully appreciated. I know of no one who has taken the trouble to comment on his ability to write the poetic conceit, and to write it so well that poems 6 and 225 (in the present volume) are among the finest lyrics of our time. I have long suspected that Mr. Cummings' head is far more accurate, if not more active, than his heart, yet much of his verse assumes the mask of the anti-intellectual, the creature who, as R. P. Blackmur properly remarked, talks "baby talk." Part of Mr. Cummings' difficulty in finding an immediate audience may be traced to the uneasy mask he wears. In the introduction to "Collected Poems," he asks us to respect him for his belief in being alive. "We are human beings; for whom birth is a supremely welcome mystery, the mystery of growing"—and, all the while, it is quite clear that his argument is based on the intellectual conceit that most people are snobs. At a time when he should be pleading for the genuine qualities of his wit, he prefers to play the role of a Christian "hardboil guys" martyr in the cause of a vague and therefore sentimental belief in vitalism:

> King Christ, this world is all aleak;
> and lifepreservers there are none:
> and waves which only He may walk
> Who dares to call Himself a man.

This is not the same as a traditional belief in Christianity or an understanding of its theology. The convention is used in a manner that excites our prejudices and furthers wit. And sometimes it is used to reinforce a belief that as long as someone lives he is still alive—which, for all I know, may be Mr. Cummings' private quarrel with Bishop Berkeley's "Essay Toward a New Theory of Vision," published in 1709. Mr. Cummings' conventional attitudes have led him into half-believing things which are denied by his own quick intelligence. Most of the poems are never the complete mask of Christian charity or of its antithesis, "hardboil" brutality, that they pretend to be. When both masks are worn in the same poem it is only Mr. Cummings' wit that saves it and gives it the distinction it has earned.

If time has dimmed the brilliance of Mr. Cummings' reputation (as I think it has) it also revives the question of his place in the literary history of the 1920's. He was known as the witty, serio-comic "bad boy" of the period. He carried with him the glamor of a personal legend which was superimposed like the montage of an Eisenstein film upon a Paris-New York-Dada-Jazz-Age background. The athletic devices that he used to make his poems—there were six volumes of them, beginning with "Tulips and Chimneys" in 1923—were of a piece with the intellectual fashions of the moment. The talk of sex, the bawdy jokes, the artful slapstick excited the admiration of young men who had just left college and had been to war. Some few of those who read "Is 5" looked at the world in the same way that E. E. Cummings wrote about it. They enjoyed

> "then shall the voice of liberty be mute?"
> He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water.
>
> a pretty girl who naked is
> is worth a million statues
>
> one thought alone: to do and die
> for God for country and for Yale.

Contrast the wit of the poems from which these lines are quoted with the wit of an Odgen Nash who came after him and we can see at once how genuinely bright the best of Mr. Cummings' youthful satire was and still remains.

Meanwhile he had become the Jazz Age Peter Pan, writing a shade too coyly of "little itchy mousies," of "the little lame balloonman" who "whistles far and wee," of "poets yeggs and thirsties"; and today, even in the twenty-two new poems added for the collection, the same coyness reappears in "Girlboys may nothing more than boygirls need." When the time came for him to grow older he said implicitly what Elinor Wylie meant as she wrote of "Beauty":

> O, she is neither good nor bad,
> But innocent and wild!
> Enshrine her and she dies, who had
> The hard heart of a child.

The very latest of Mr. Cummings' new poems are fixed in rigid attitudes of youth, which now seem to show signs of weariness, caused by the strain of a prolonged defiance against "the sweet & aged people who rule this world," against the "unhearts," the "unminds," the "unlives." In this defiance, there is less snobbery than evidence of fear: fear of being misunderstood, fear of being less than unique, fear of the many rising against the few and, over all, a complex and contradictory fear of loneliness.

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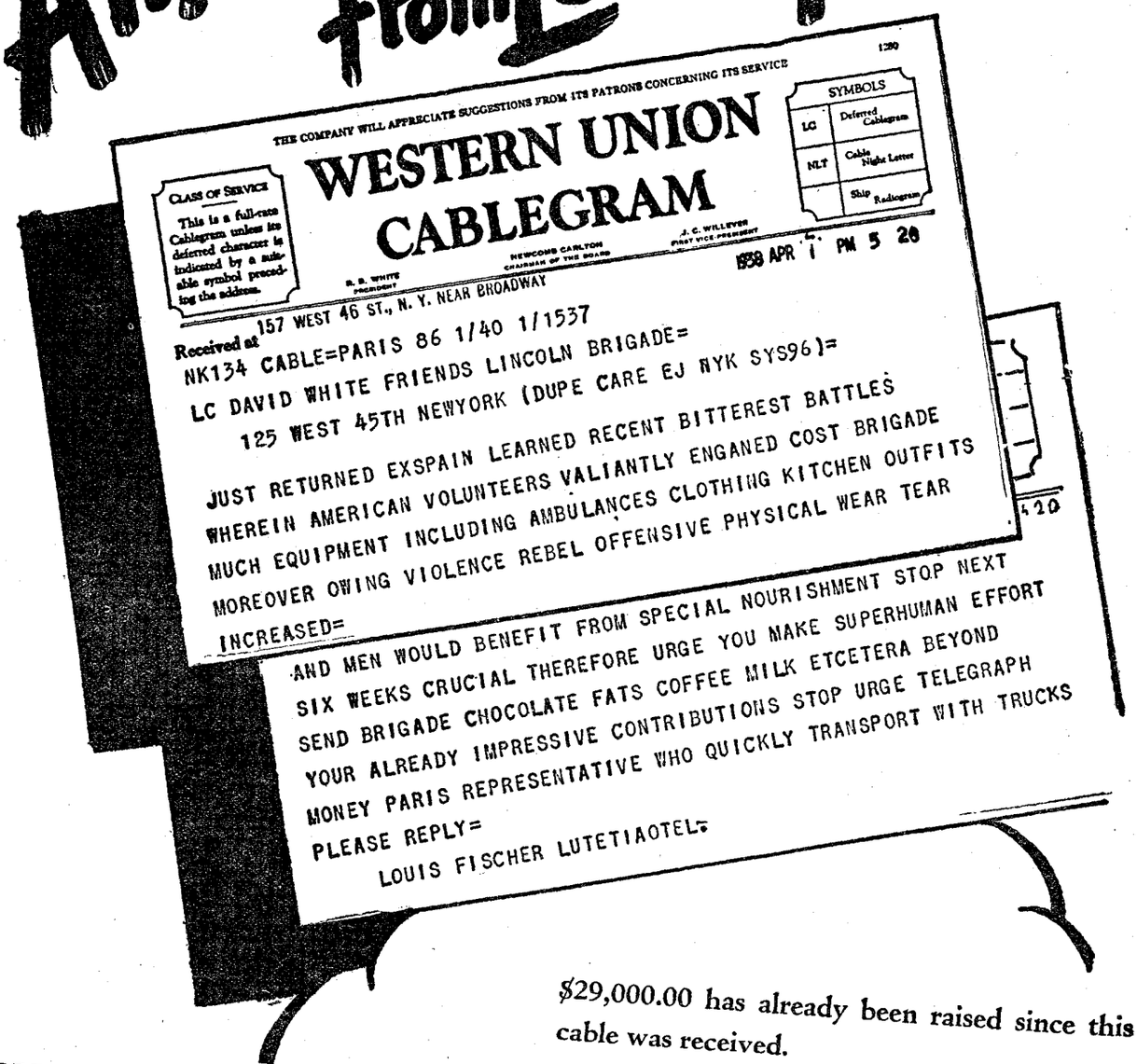

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For the critic of our times, there should be some significance in noting that Mr. Cummings is not the only writer who has remained too young too long. The same charge of seeming adolescent beyond their years may be brought against many American writers who had reached the age of twenty-one between 1914 and 1924. The desert of our "wasteland" period in both prose and verse is white with the bones of those whose careers may be best described as a lingering adolescence followed by a long senility. As we reread their work it seems as though the difficult task of an actual maturity has been retarded or cast aside as unimportant. John Dos Passos seems to be among the very few who are pointing the way toward a maturity that has shown us the writer's responsibility to his time and place. W. B. Yeats chose the title "Responsibilities" for the book that contained the poems of his middle years. Today, Mr. Cummings has a choice somewhere in the great distance between the roads taken by Dos Passos and by Yeats. However dark or bright his own road may be, "the hard heart of a child" can no longer lead him.

HORACE GREGORY

Spring Fiction

The Yearling, by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.
Tommy Lee Feathers, by Ed Bell. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

THE JOYS AND PERILS of boyhood are dangerous things to write about even when you have been a boy: the values of adulthood are not a boy's world really, and the years blur together with such increasing speed that we never remember accurately—we assume, we suppose, we fill in. And we walk a rope between too much sensibility and too much simplicity. When women—mothers, lovers, SPCA relicts—write about boyhood, they had better write objectively or not at all. Speculate they may; create the character from within they hadn't better. Marjorie Rawlings' new book is about a boy, his learning the Lesson of Life, his becoming not-a-boy-any-longer. And what gets in the way of its complete success is not its length which is long or its action which is rather inactive, but its insistence on spinning boyhood moods out of a spiderweb prose. Let it be said quite directly that youngsters of the male affinity may be seven-fingered, hammer-headed, oversexed, overbrained, poets or fairies, but no boy who ever hoed his row and shot down his own venison ever was *conscious* of such gossamer sets of emotional tentacles as Jody Baxter is made to wave through this novel.

But lord, there is fine stuff here. It is the central-Florida country, way back in the scrub (somewhat back in time too), with the three Baxters, hard-bitten, hard-luck, scratching a living out of one "island," the black Forresters brawling lavishly on another four miles away, and all the rest around them wild land—woods, swamp and sinkholes, snakes and 'gators, deer, bear, cats, coons, wolves, etc. Penny Baxter stalks and labors heroically through the year of the story like a twisted, runty oak. It is from him that the yearling Jody learns all the wisdom of the creatures and the land, a complex exciting lore that spreads out as naturally here as life in the open. The author has a contagious relish for every detail of living, the look and smell of the day, planting and cooking, how to track, shoot, skin, quarter, smoke the meat and try out the fat. It gets so every extra quart of cow peas, or cornmeal, or bear's grease in the Baxter smokehouse makes your mouth water; and the long rain, the dead heifer, etc., become the tragedies they are in such a fierce touch-and-go economy.

The speech too—difficult in its warped simplicity and color—is clear as a bell. The characters are always right when they're speaking "And I hate anything is . . . so bowlegged his breeches near about make a mark on the ground": Ma Baxter and the big Forresters, Grandma Hutto and the little crippled Fodder-wing, whom all the creatures loved. And they are full and alive when in action: drinking, cooking, chasing varmints or romping on one another. But it is the inner inwardness, especially of Jody (plus a straining at the symbol of the little old fawn he loved and had to see killed), that has partly cloyed such lovely robust stuff by its 428th page, touched with beauty though it is: "Somewhere beyond the sink-hole, past the magnolia, under the live oaks, a boy and a yearling ran side by side, and were gone forever."

"Tommy Lee Feathers" is not another "Fish on the Steeple": the material is different, it has less salt and pressure as fiction, and no Cap'm Man. It is that particularly delicate accomplishment, a novel about Negroes by a white man; and it makes a fine book for reading. Tommy is the son of Sis Feathers, the great preacher woman of Marrowbone, Tennessee. Sis is dead set against her great hulking baby helling around the way he is, particularly with the game of football, at which he is the wonder of the state. Tommy gets mixed up with Lura the high-yellow and through this with his best friend Big Junior, whom he finally has to shoot in self-defense. There is bad blood in Marrowbone then, in spite of the surface gayety of parties and chicken stealing and young folks in the tall grass.

Ed Bell's other novel showed a great aim for the joints in the armor of the respectable and the mean rich—in its bland way it was the most sly and cutting sociological novel ever written. The same talent is here: Revunt Looper robs graves and paws the girls, as good and trusty servant to the Big Wheel, the man of business and property and the church whose hand is in everything. The Coach isn't a pure rat, but he is shifty and too enterprising: funny as was his ruse for planting stolen chickens in Sis Feathers' privy and releasing her son for the big game, it was that game where Tommy Lee was shot and killed, and he was pretty near all she had to live for. Well, all types to make a world, etc., and bad or good, they are so ribald, violent, freely living and musical of speech that it's a pleasure to have known them. It seems a pity to leave this book with no more said of the life in it, but the truth about it can be said in some of its own words: "I see Ole

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Feathuhs grin that way an say to myself, Man the stuff's heah and she really mellow." OTIS FERGUSON

Pity for Women, by Henry de Montherlant. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.75.

COUNT HENRY DE MONTHERLANT'S FAMILY has been established in France since the eleventh century. In the bull-ring he made two killings before he was fifteen. In the athletic field he ran the hundred meters in 11 4-5 seconds. In the Great War he served in the American as well as the French army. In literature he has won the following prizes: the Grand Prix de Littérature de l'Académie Française, the Northcliffe Prize, the Heinemann Award and the Prize of the Foundation Tunisienne. It would seem that such a dignified record would entitle him to a little fun writing about a man who knocks the women cold.

Pierre Costals, the hero of the two volumes combined here, "Young Girls" and "Pity for Women," is a celebrated writer of thirty-four who has involved himself seriously with three women, two of them through correspondence about his work. Thérèse is a little peasant mystic to whom, in order to curb her passion for him (by mail) he recommends the Church; Andrée is an intelligent spinster of surpassing ugliness; Solange is a little beauty who becomes the object of his favor because she is so ravishingly stupid. In M. Costals' apartment on the avenue Henri Martin he has a special seduction room called the "Tomb of the Unknown Woman" (a pun here on *tombeau* and *tomber*) where he drives women mad. Little Thérèse goes stark mad merely through his letters, but the others go mad in the usual way. M. Costals, psychologist and cynic, has any number of Germaines and Guigites and other lady tumblers whom he puts on ice during his wooing of the virgin Solange and, if the truth must be told, there is a touch of the Birdseye about the master's entire courting technique. Even the most divine moron must have gotten a little surly finding herself undressed more for lectures than for laboratory, and instead of going mad might well have rushed out to trade a dozen aphorisms for one good Apache.

Costals and his ladies swim in love and love alone and these waters are reflected sensitively enough. Of love in its practical moments de Montherlant writes far better than he does of frustration, for his ugly Andrée's futile infatuation is a caricature as grotesque as the Mikado's Katisha. She gets caught in revolving doors, she reads books, she doesn't wash her neck. Nor is M. Costals either as psychologist or Don Juan convincing. Such fabulous men should be described in detail right up to their full five feet two. It may be that women literally did lose consciousness at his merest kiss but he must have slugged them with a *bon mot* first. And how reliable is a psychologist who never doubts that every female screw-ball who writes him a fan letter lives for him alone just as she tells it?

"Love does not exist in nature. Women invented it," etc., etc., says the author. A mild diversion may be found by running through the book substituting "man" for "woman" or "benedict" for "bachelor" just to see the aphorisms come out still sound as a bell only appealing to different people. In de Montherlant's head the epigrams go clicking like doll's eyes, for characters are "like all women," "like all bachelors," life is love, love is life and

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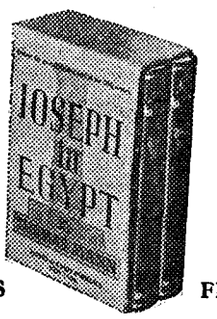

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in Paris it is spring, spring, spring. There is much that is delicately written, much Coletteish comment on *l'amour*, but *l'amour* without Colette's eyes, nose or ears, *l'amour* with only a copybook. "Pity for Women" is too much Lou Tellegen and not enough the de Montherlant we admire for "Perish in Their Pride." There was a fine book.

DAWN POWELL

What People Said, by W. L. White. New York: The Viking Press. $2.75.

THIS SOLID, IMPRESSIVE NOVEL traces a small-town scandal from its origin in college fraternities, through its growth in the State House lobbying chambers, up to its explosion and the slowly receding aftermath. Chief cause of the scandal is Lee Norssex, who sets up an expensive front of wealth and geniality on the framework of forged bonds. Chief spectator is Junior Carrough, heir to the local newspaper, big-hearted and gullible. These and others are treated in somewhat the same way that Dos Passos treats his characters in "U.S.A.": sketched separately in significant phases, and woven together gradually as the pattern expands.

But the book resembles the Dos Passos trilogy not merely in structure, but also because its focus is on a cross-section of society. Though Lee and his father occasionally steal the show, the interest here is Main Street, its people engulfed in the affair through friendship or finance or simply by participation in the undertones of gossip and malice. What you remember is not that Lee was a forger, but rather that for an ambitious fellow like himself, lacking the proper footing, there was little chance of getting to first base in big business without being slick and maybe dishonest. The indictment that is implicit is not against the Norssexes, who raise funds for the community center while mismanaging bonds for the school board. It is against the business men who hide their own indiscretions under righteous indignation; against the courts which stretch Lee's sentence to a maximum because of a frightened Governor backstage; against the legislators who go in for impeachment lest the opposite party have a talking point next election. And because he constructs it artfully, bolsters it with realistic backgrounds and delivers it throughout in an even, well balanced prose, Mr. White's indictment strikes home on every count.

MIRIAM BORGENICHT

Man's Courage, by Joseph Vogel. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

HIS COURAGE doesn't get him anything when he's a worker standing alone. . . . Adam Wolak is a big, husky, slow-witted Pole who for eighteen years, while laboring in a town of middle New York, has been ridden by the peasant dream of saving enough money to buy a farm. Then the depression catches up with him; he loses his job. The farm money ($80!) is soon eaten away. With the landlord threatening to put him and his wife and their ten-year-old boy out of their flat, Wolak goes on relief.

That's not the cinch it sounds. His pride in his two good fists and his self-respect are pretty well shot before he manages to cut through all the red tape and establish himself as a "client," the ERB moving his family into a shack on the edge of town. A "garden" goes with the shack. (Ah!

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heart's desire about to be realized, thanks to government bounty.) Knowing that Mrs. Wolak is fond of flowers, the investigator offers to bring seeds. There's one small hitch? The "garden" is covered with ashes. Will plants grow in ashes? "Human life grows in ashes," Wolak tells her—why not plants?

The engine of relief, as it impresses the victim flattened under it, is shown in all its creaking iron parts. Rules are everything, beneficiaries so many digits totaling a caseload. You're starving? (Out to gyp the taxpayers, more likely.) Well, prove it doesn't serve you right. The Wolaks have been exiled to an ash heap, spiritually more so than physically. From school principal to priest, from intake clerk to cynical horse doctor, everybody, lacking personal experience of want, is unable to imagine himself in Wolak's shoes.

Finally Wolak lands a temporary job. But simultaneously his relief is stopped and his work peters out. With his boy sick in bed, his wife frantic, he is kicking up a fuss at the relief office, trying to make them understand a doctor is needed right away, at the moment when a marshal and two burly helpers arrive at his shack. They're bent on enforcing a writ of dispossess. Wolak gets home as they start to lay hold of the furniture, puts up a fight and scares the men off with an unloaded shotgun. The marshal sends for the cops. One of them sneaks up to the window, his gun out, and—blooey. Curtains.

Earlier, an attempt to organize the unemployed of the town had fizzled; now, however, Wolak's funeral is turned into a mass manifestation of protest: "A deep hush settled over the city. It was not a mournful hush. Those people following the coffin of Adam Wolak did not display the crestfallen attitude of mourners; theirs was the defiant attitude of demonstrators. What they had failed to accomplish for the living, death had achieved. Death had united them in a common purpose. . . . The power of [their] silence beat against the temples of the city."

Even this orthodox proletarian ending to his book (the lifted fist, the Red Hope) Vogel makes acceptable, if not inevitable, which says a lot for his art. And it *is* art, don't let anybody tell you differently—perhaps the first, the only out-and-out U. S. proletarian novel worthy of being so called. It should be noticed that "Man's Courage" is far from being the anatomy of gloom a brief outline of its story might lead you to expect; it's full of warmly human touches, Vogel having his left eye on the more cussed traits of *homo sapiens*, his right on the drolleries springing from the selfsame traits. A very fine talent any way you look at him, he has published the year's "must" book—if writing as writing interests you.

FRED R. MILLER

World's End, by Pamela Hansford Johnson. New York: Carrick and Evans. $2.50.

THE ANALOGY with Hemingway doesn't—as if you thought it really would—hold. Beyond the circumstance that "World's End" and "A Farewell to Arms" each closes on the death in childbirth of its heroine, the two books have few common grounds, reviewers to the contrary. It would probably be nearer the mark (provided you must have your analogies) to speak of Miss Johnson's opus as a sort of English "Little Man, What Now?" With of course an English difference.

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Miss Johnson isn't so bad—for an English writer of today. Frankly, she isn't so hot either. This adds up to so-so. But the girl does have sincerity and that's always worth a vote of confidence; also, she exhibits less of that deadly stuffiness than many another limejuicer you might mention, and she writes without floss of everyday folk, depression casualties. After a promising start, her new yarn unluckily begins to go glib (she's only twenty-six and this is her fourth novel, alas), and glibness, want of depth, is what in the long run throws her.

To give one example of the false note: she gets her loving young couple into bed, and suddenly the love talk switches to war talk (". . . we live on strain, waiting, struggling, not understanding what the papers actually mean or what's being done to save us . . .") and—click—the wife is blubbering with abstract fear. The scene by overstating its effects gives a note of absurdity to the very real danger of war. . . . At the last, with his wife and baby dead, the man takes ship for Spain, to fight in the Loyalist cause.

F. R. M.

The Larger View, by Benjamin Kaverin. New York: Stackpole Sons. $2.75.

HERE IS A NEW, long and extremely interesting novel from Soviet Russia. It must be said at once that Kaverin shows signs of immaturity. He is prolix where, for example, Romanov would be witty; expository where Alexei Tolstoy would be dramatic; and in place of the traditional style of philosophical realism, which has given his countrymen a mastery over the novel as a literary form, Kaverin uses the outmoded European style of psychological naturalism. The result is a diminution of that poetic intensity which one usually discovers in Russian novels. On the other hand Kaverin's method of accumulative naturalistic detail piles up an extraordinarily authentic record of the Leningrad of ten years ago, with its theatres, sports, rumors, incipient conspiracies, students, academicians, scientists, light-o'-loves, thieves, politicians, Communists and shopkeepers. The effect is of a startlingly normal, that is to say *bourgeois* city, not much unlike any other nation's provincial city, such as Boston or Dublin. Kaverin ingeniously keeps the differences where they at that time belonged: subterranean forces at work beneath the surfaces of university and public life.

The novel gives the direct lie to those who assert that only works of propaganda are permitted in the Soviet Union, for there is scarcely a trace of tendentiousness here. The plot revolves around the antipodal characters of two students. Trubachevsky is a young paleontologist who, essentially through temperamental weakness, becomes involved in a criminal attempt to steal valuable historical documents. His resultant shock and self-criticism are paralleled by the story of Kartashikin, a medical student and son of a revolutionary hero, whose temperament is more rugged but also susceptible to certain temptations. The interaction of these students with each other and with their environment, together with the wealth of factual observation, makes for a full portrait of modern Russian life. Unfortunately the translation by Leda Swan is tediously flat.

MICHAEL SAYERS

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I Live under a Black Sun, by Edith Sitwell. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

IN SETTING the story of Jonathan Swift's relationship with Stella and Vanessa in a twentieth-century novel, Miss Sitwell makes use of the author's journals, an abundance of apocryphal material and a parallel theme of her own imagination. Because the details have come down to us solely by way of gossip and conjecture, they cannot alter or increase our understanding of Swift. But their inadequacy for biography does not detract from their value for fiction. From them emerges a modernized version of the cynic whose life had so little of the calm and reason attributed to his age. Miss Sitwell follows through his rare moments of tenderness, through the indignation which gave way to disgust, up to his final tortured years, hemmed in by a deepening silence, tormented by dizziness and goaded by an anger that slowly mounted to madness; the giant fretted away by those trivialities which all his life he had regarded with contempt.

This theme of spiritual disintegration is a familiar one in Edith Sitwell's poetry. Here, however, she balances it against another: the disintegration of a world into blindness and hate. While bringing up to date Swift's misanthropy she also translates his "Modest Proposal" in terms of the Ireland of 1920. The contrapuntal form is effected by a rather artificial mechanism in the plot (linking Jonathan's future housekeeper with the monstrous effects of war). But it is carried out by a decorative prose, more adept at sustaining a mood than at capturing what Swift called the "cold undying truth." It is a strangely luxurious background for such material as the poverty of mankind and the degeneration of a Gulliver. M. B.

Harriet Monroe

A Poet's Life: Seventy Years in a Changing World, by Harriet Monroe. New York: The Macmillan Company. 488 pages. $5.

THIS IS an enjoyable and illuminating book—if the luck of poetry in a dull world and a devoted woman's battle to establish it here are of any concern to the "attentive reader." Here's the whole story of the beginnings of modern poetry in America—enthusiastically, almost sadly, told by the one, the solitary one, who most made way for it among us and lived past the time of that first blossoming. Harriet Monroe was not a great poet; she was more successful as an instigator to poetry than as a writer of it. But inasmuch as she had the taste and the courage for poetic adventure it is not a misnomer to call her autobiography "A Poet's Life."

I think, though, that the title does not quite suggest the full truth either of the book or of the woman. Action is the password to the world for which Harriet Monroe most cared. She came upon the scene at a time when literature, especially poetry, was at a chronic ebb among us; by her action she brought up the tide a little. By her action. Others did the best of the writing but she did much of the work of establishment. Harriet Monroe had courage and loved poetry. Her courage and her love led her into some pretty deep water, but she came through with achievement

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for that which she loved, through direct action. Finally she died in action, on a mountaintop in Peru.

She speaks of standing on the kitchen table as a child and in a determined voice bringing the Irish servant to tears with an impassioned recital of "Ireland's shame," in that Ireland had submitted without fighting to England's tyranny. She remembered, in later years, Charlotte Cushman as Lady Macbeth reciting the lines,

> Art thou afraid
> To be the same in thine own act and valor
> As thou art in desire?

Full of repressions, dreading the genus male, this young woman of the round face and liquid eyes stood once at the prow of a transatlantic liner while for an hour and more a patient and eloquent Frenchman tried to explain to her what a waste it was for so lovely a woman to cling so bitterly to the ideal while love went a-begging.

Few knew—I didn't—how extensive and varied had been Harriet Monroe's travels and friendships. The West, Mexico, Europe from one end to the other, Egypt, China, the Pacific and finally the land of the Incas. She knew the literary milieu of New York City in the 90's: all the names. She spoke French fluently, had lived in London, Paris—had seen Moscow and Pekin before western ways had touched them.

Her family was distinguished. Her sisters married brilliant men. She remembered Chicago before the great fire and after it. The World's Columbian Exposition has never been so well revealed and appreciated as through her imagination and her eyes. And her part in it was distinguished. Strangest of strange accounts.

She had already lived a full life of struggle, achievement and sorrow when, well past the age of forty, she conceived a brilliant plan for the encouragement of the art of poetry in America. Poetry, A Magazine of Verse, will remain her greatest claim to distinction.

The story of the founding and continuance of this project does not enter her biography until the two hundred and fiftieth page. From that time on Harriet Monroe was a "married" woman. Impossible to go into even the enumeration of the names of great and near great whom she drew about her from that time forward. In places it reads like the Book of Numbers. But this, the most important part of her biography, may possibly be the least interesting to the general reader. It is beautiful to see her record the first reactions of the various personalities of those days to the "new verse." Many will cringe a bit today at what they thought then—so gracefully documented.

The book is directly and simply written, almost too intimately at times. We feel almost too keenly a sorrow which Harriet Monroe never admits except in one flat paragraph which refers to a sonnet or two where the truth may perhaps have been told. The last chapter in the book, the last, that is, that Harriet Monroe herself set down, is a confession of religious faith dating back no doubt to her convent days in Baltimore. It is pathetic as a courageous child's submission to life's adversities. The book is instructive, appealing and challenging also to a world that has already begun to forget almost everything for which this gifted woman fought so valiantly.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

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New Books: A Reader's List

YOU CAN'T DO THAT, by George Seldes (Modern Age, 50 cents). Mr. Seldes, brilliant foreign correspondent and student of the press, tells just who is threatening our civil liberties, and how, when and where. He names names, quotes documents, and in general writes a Who's Who of the Brown Network—those numerous and powerful people who, consciously or unconsciously, are working for the arrival of fascism in America, even though they would probably call it Anti-Fascism.

SIP! SWALLOW! by A. P. Herbert (Doubleday, Doran, $2). A collection of skits and studies by one of Punch's most popular writers, ranging from how to cure hiccups (valuable, this) to parliamentary procedure and snake-charming.

BE LOVED NO MORE, by Arthur Bernon Tourtellot (Houghton Mifflin, $3.50). The biography of Fanny Burney, famous novelist at twenty-six, lady-in-waiting at Windsor in her thirties, forgotten in her old age by a public that had known Keats and was beginning to like Dickens. Entertaining picture of eighteenth-century London and Dr. Johnson's circle.

ONE MAN IN HIS TIME, by Maud and Otis Skinner (U. of Pennsylvania, $2.50). A vivid account of the early American theatre, based on the journal of an obscure actor of the 1940's. Glimpses of the frontier, of the Booths, Forrest, Charlotte Cushman. Belongs in every library of Americana.

COÖPERATION: AN AMERICAN WAY, by John Daniels (Covici, Friede, $3). An intelligent and usable discussion of consumers' coöperatives, by a man who has studied them for nineteen years. Mr. Daniels believes that coöperatives are spiritually a creative expression of democracy; and that economically they are a mutation of capitalism which will eventually supersede the profit system.

GEORGIAN ADVENTURE, by Douglas Jerrold ($3.50). An English reactionary writes wittily about events and personages of the last quarter century. Of Katherine Mansfield: "People she had met became significant to her not because God had made them but because she had met them." Of Franco's Holy Crusade: "In Spain, the reception given to the Guernica lie by the European democracies and the United States has merely strengthened the prejudice already existing against the democratic system."

WOMAN ON HORSEBACK, by William E. Barrett (Stokes, $3.). Biography of Francisco Lopez, who, encouraged by his Irish mistress, gave Paraguay of the 1860's a preview of modern dictatorship. Told with as impartial restraint as one can take towards a reign of lust and savagery, stubborn courage and inevitable defeat. A colorful story.

THE PAST MUST ALTER, by Albert J. Guerard (Holt, $2.50). A sensitive, moving novel, mostly about a mother-son relationship. Equally facile at penetrating the mind of an imaginative child and sketching in a background that ranges from California carnivals to a European post-war sanitarium.

THE MAN WHO INSULTED SOMERSVILLE, by Jennings Rice (Harpers, $2.50). The sly revenge of a man whose family tree had branches in the town brothels and beer joints as well as in its reputable mansions. An ingenious, improbable plot, unraveled in pedestrian fashion.

WE FARM FOR A HOBBY AND MAKE IT PAY, by Henry Tetlow (William Morrow, $2). How one family

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General Secretary, Communist Party, U.S.A.

NO says FREDERICK J. LIBBY
Executive Secretary, National Council for the Prevention of War

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THE DAUGHTER, by Bessie Breuer (Simon and Schuster, $2.50). High-pitched novel of two emotional women who have nothing to live for but their love affairs. Despite a blurred solution and occasional overwriting, the story quivers with intensity and frequent beauty.

Contributors

H. N. BRAILSFORD, London correspondent for The New Republic, is widely known as a writer on international affairs.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY's most recent book is "To Have and Have Not," was published last fall. He has been in Spain during a large part of the civil war as a newspaper correspondent.

VIRGINIUS DABNEY is the chief editorial writer of The Richmond Times-Dispatch and author of "Liberalism in the South."

ROBERT STUART has done labor reporting for A. F. of L. and CIO newspapers from New York to San Francisco.

ROBERT CANTWELL, author of "Laugh and Lie Down" and "The Land of Plenty," has recently completed a third novel. He is on the staff of Time.

EDMUND WILSON's most recent book is "The Triple Thinkers," a collection of essays.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON's new book, "The Politicos," has just been published by Harcourt, Brace. He is the author, among other books, of biographies of Zola and Rosseau and of "The Robber Barons."

FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN, professor of Political Science at Williams College, is the author of "War and Diplomacy in the French Republic," "The Nazi Dictatorship," "Germany Since 1918" and "International Politics."

ELISEO VIVAS is a member of the Philosophy Department at the University of Wisconsin.

HORACE GREGORY is the author of several volumes of verse and editor of a symposium, "New Letters in America," published last fall. He is a member of the English faculty at Sarah Lawrence College.

DAWN POWELL, novelist and playwright, is the author, among other books, of "The Story of a Country Boy" and "Turn, Magic Wheel."

MIRIAM BORGENICHT is a free-lance book reviewer.

FRED R. MILLER, erstwhile short-story writer and editor of Blast, is now working as a draughtsman in New York City.

MICHAEL SAYERS' short stories have appeared in O'Brien's "Best British Short Stories" and he has contributed dramatic criticism to The New Masses. He is play editor for Norman Bel Geddes.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS' most recent book is "Life Along the Passaic River," a collection of short stories. He is the author of a novel, "White Mule," and of several books of verse.

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